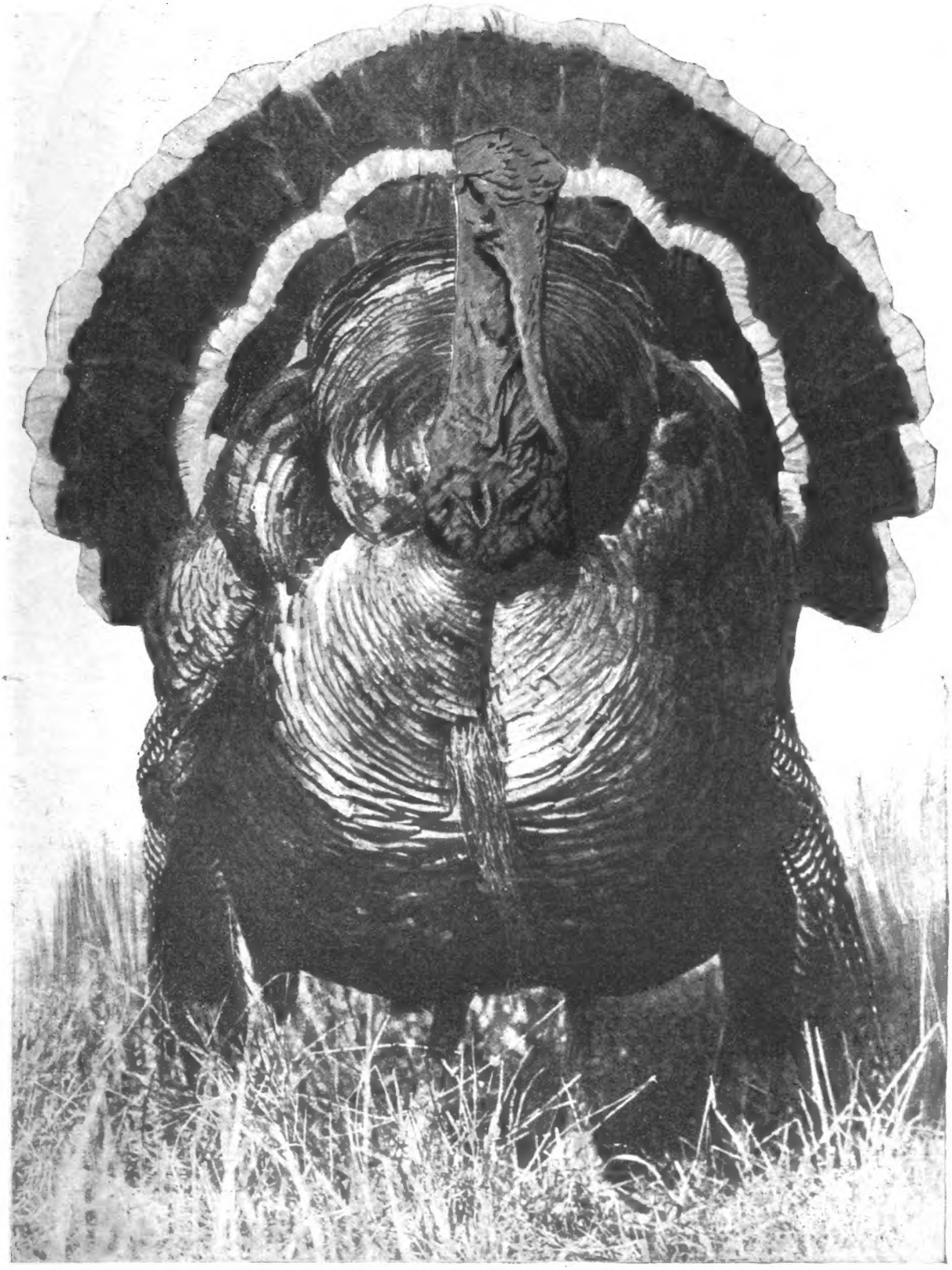
His Highness



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MOTHER reads her baby's eyes and knows that his sweet, serious, drowsy look spells deep contentment.

Contentment because he has just been bathed with the velvety, soothing lather of Ivory Soap. How soft it felt against his tender flesh; how clean and smooth and satiny his rose-leaf skin after clear water had rinsed away the soapy bubbles.

Contentment because he is clothed in fresh, sweet garments, washed snowy white with Ivory. No soapy smell or chafing harshness to the soft, fine fabrics cleansed with this pure, mild, easy-rinsing soap.

Physicians, nurses, careful mothers know that Ivory is the ideal soap for nursery use.

Send for free sample package of Ivory Soap Flakes

—snowlike flakes of Ivory Soap for the convenient laundering of baby's finest dresses, sweaters, silk robes, and blankets without rubbing. Ivory Soap Flakes will keep all your loveliest things like new. For free trial size package, write to Department 20-K, The Procter & Gamble Co., Cincinnati, O.

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THE Manufacturers of Ivory Soap and Ivory Soap Flakes also make the following general household soaps: P. & G.—The White Naphtha Soap, Star Soap, and Star Naphtha Washing Powder, thus enabling the housekeeper to use a Procter & Gamble high quality soap for every purpose.

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Everybody's Magazine

NUMBER FIVE NOVEMBER, 1920 VOLUME XLIII

"Some Talk *of* Alexander——"

By A. S. M. Hutchinson

Author of "Once Aboard the Lugger," "The Happy Warrior," etc.

We offer this unusual story of heroic character as a foretaste of what is in store for you in the way of sharp, moving, high-order fiction when, in the December number, we begin to print Mr. Hutchinson's new serial, "If Winter Comes," the first since the war which took him to France and out of writing. With this story you will join us in hurrahing that Mr. Hutchinson has recovered from the depressing effects of the war on his art, and has got back his writing hand after so long a silence.

HIS parents called him Hector. When he and Tom and Harry, his brothers, were tiny things, his pretty young mother used to stand them about the piano and sing pretty old-fashioned songs to them. Presently she would beam at her first-born and cry "Now Hector's song!" and then the piano would change from the plaintive melodies and thump and jingle out the defiant, blaring strains, and they would all shout:

Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules,
Of HECTOR and Lysander and such great names as these——

What fun! How they would all jump about and shout it while his mother laughed and nodded from the piano! What jolly, jolly fun!

But from the age of twelve, when first he heard fully of the redoubtable Trojan whose name he bore, actually aware by then how ill, how grotesquely, it suited him—from then onward, all his life, how he hated the name! How he loathed and detested the defiant, blaring tune!

Nobody knew how much he hated the name. He hated it so much that, after that first term at school, when the mortification of the thing was new and bitter upon him, he never could respond lovingly to the name on his parents' lips. That damped whatever demonstrativeness of affection he ever showed toward his parents, and equally damped whatever depth of affection he ever felt; and neither, as he came out of babyhood, was remarkable. Demonstrativeness and depth, applied to any affair, were two of the many gifts forgotten by the fairies at his christening.

When he was sixteen, he was entered with others of his form for the London Matriculation examination. He dreaded the examination, as he always dreaded any ordeal, whether of mind or muscle, but he dreaded much more the public exposure of the hated name entailed by his master checking over the list of candidates before the entries were sent in.

"Tell me if I've got any of your Christian names wrong," said the master, and misery descended upon him whose Christian name was Hector.

"Abney," read the master. "Abney—John. Allen—Henry James. Bartlett—Philip. Brown—Arthur George. Bywash—Hector."

A titter ran round the class. All the lusty young barbarians—possible Hectors any of them, but bearing such common names as James and Frank and Charles—all looked and grinned at the crimsoned, gawky youth who bore the name of the most valiant of all the valorous Trojans, and who in every line of his face and figure mocked that name to scorn.

One boy among the grinning desks puffed out his chest and drubbed it and pointed derisively at the hollow chest of Bywash—Hector; another pantomimed in the air, and suggested with wordless lips the hateful tune:

Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules,
Of HECTOR and Lysander and such great names as these——

How he hated it! How he hated his name! Why, why, didn't the master go on?

The master, an indulgent person—and the formality upon which he was engaged an indulgent interval in the morning's discipline—looked up at the disturbance. He apprehended its cause and himself contributed a comprehending and sympathetic smile to the mocking grins, whereat the joke was taken up with loud and noisy delight; and the hatred of his species, and of his name, and the smoldering sense of wrong done him by his parents in giving him such a hateful name, flared deeply on Hector's scarlet cheeks.

EVERYBODY enjoyed the joke, and the master joined in it, because it *was* a joke that such a fatuous person as Bywash should have such a dashing name as Hector. For Bywash was a notorious ass. The butt of the form. Played no games, had no hobbies, did nothing, knew nothing, chummed with no one, slovenly, shiftless, characterless, gawky, unhealthy—and called Hector!

Ha! Ha—ha! What a name! What an ass! "Look out, Bywash!"

Bywash always flinched and ducked when any one shouted "Look out Bywash!" as if he feared something was being chucked at him.

Things very often were chucked at him.

The holidays, at this period of his life, were not much relief from the unhappiness of school. He passed his time in doing what his father called "lounging about the house." He was not even fond of reading. He wasn't fond of anything. His two brothers were, to him, precisely of a part with his noisy schoolmates. He was the eldest of the three, but they were at much the better school. They were at Tidborough; he was only at Chovensbury Grammar School. They had won Tidborough scholarships, enabling their education at the famous, and famously expensive, Public School to be afforded; he had not won a scholarship, nor even won a prize in his life, and his lot was the Grammar School at Chovensbury. Tidborough ranked with Charterhouse, Winchester and Rugby, and in the holidays Hector's brothers in many little ways condescended toward Hector with the superiority that any Tidborough boy gave himself over any boy not of the English Public Schools that can be numbered on the fingers of one hand—let alone the Grammar School at Chovensbury!

HECTOR accepted this position in regard to his brothers. He always accepted any position. Nothing ever seemed to rouse him, or even to interest him. In the holidays (their home was at Alton, eight miles from Tidborough and five from Chovensbury) Tom and Harry vigorously kept up their school sports, went to parties, and generally robustiously enjoyed themselves within their wide circle of neighboring friends. Hector lounged about the house.

Then school-days ended. Tom went into the army; Harry floated on scholarships to Oxford, thence to enter the civil service. Fine boys; their father was proud of them. Hector, far from a fine boy, and evincing not even enough of affection, let alone of talent, to make his father proud of him, was got into an office at Tidborough as a clerk—Wragson's, the big brewers.

His father spoke seriously, though kindly, to him when at seventeen and a half he was removed from Chovensbury Grammar School and the clerkship at Wragson's found for him.

"You must begin to assert yourself now, Hector, my boy," his father told him.

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"You've not done well at school, you know; that's why you're going in for this kind of thing, instead of the careers your brothers are launching out on. You could have had any career you liked, you know, Hector, medicine, the law, the church, the army—if you had joined hard work and scholarships, as your brothers have, to the very little I am able to provide in the way of money. But you haven't. Well, well, that's all over now, my boy. You mustn't look on this that we've found for you as a come-down, you know. There're as great opportunities for getting on in the world in business as ever there are in the professions Tom and Harry have chosen. Indeed, nowadays, there are much greater possibilities. Captains of industry—merchant princes—you know what the tendencies are nowadays; that's the goal you must set before yourself, my boy; and if you indeed steadily set it before yourself and apply your every effort to achieving it—why in a very few years we shall have you the envy of your brothers and the pride of your old father and your dear mother. Eh? Come that's the program, isn't it, my boy? A fresh start, good prospects and a fine future. Eh, Hector?"

Hector, listening in his lackadaisical, inattentive sort of way, had not responded a word.

His father asked him rather testily; "You like the idea of going into Wragson's, don't you? You see the prospects, don't you?"

"Oh, I don't mind if I do, father," was Hector's response.

His father rather disgustedly closed the interview. "Don't mind if I do!" What a spirit to take it in.

II

AND so school-days were ended and the start in life period begun.

This was the period of youth, of young manhood, and Tom and Harry made much of it. When they were at home for their vacations they were a gay, full-blooded and taking pair, much in demand in all the society round about and much given to jolly dalliance with the daughters of the countryside. They had between them quite a number of youthful love affairs, harmless, lightly come and lightly go affairs such as every properly constituted young man touches in his student days, and the cause of much genial bantering by their proud and happy father.

Entirely different the case with Hector. As in his school-days he neglected all school-day sports and interests, so in his youth he developed not the smallest aptitude for youth's affinities and recreations. Hector had lodgings in Tidborough. A fortnight in the year represented his vacation, he spent it at home (still lounging about the house) and it happened that his fortnight never coincided with the dates of the generous vacations of his brothers. Thus within two or three years he quite lost touch with his brothers.

Ah, yet doth beauty, like a dial hand,
Steal from his person with no pace perceived.

As the hands of a clock, ever moving away yet never perceptible in their motion, so—imperceptibly but very surely—Hector began to move out of relations with his home and with the friends of his home; and new friends he made none. When he was thirty his father and mother died, in the same year. He was naturally distressed, but his distress did not go very deep or last very long. He simply was not constituted to feel anything deeply or lastingly. He was awfully sorry, and there, in a month, was the end of it, and the absolute end of a good deal more, for the matter of that. The hateful "Hector" was now finally and completely cut out of him. His brothers were in India, and both married; his parents were in the churchyard, his old home was sold, all the young broods of neighbors with whom he had been contemporaneous were, like Tom and Harry, spread far away on vigorous wings; he was absolutely alone and absolutely lonely, and that suited him exactly. He was just "Bywash"; by signature H. Bywash—and H., nine times out of ten, signifies Henry. There remained not so much as a hint of Hector.

HE LEFT Wragson's. A very few months at Wragson's had sufficed to show the heads of the firm that this was no budding captain of industry or merchant prince they had accommodated with a stool in their counting-house. Young fellows who came into clerkships about the same time as himself moved across the office floor to stools of increased importance, and ultimately, some of them, from stools into the padded chairs of considerable officers of the firm. Hector remained sluggishly on that he had dropped onto the first day of his arrival. It was jokingly said that it required an earthquake to move Bywash. In the form of a devastating gale of reorganization which swept through the office, an earthquake shook Wragson's very shortly after the death of his parents, and Hector, a deadweight in the counting-house, went out before it as chaff before the fan.

He drifted out, much as, twelve years before, he had drifted in. After some aimless idleness he began to drift about in search of new employment. He was for a short time in the publishing office of the *County Times*, for a short time in the clerical department of Fortune, East & Sabre, the big church and school furnishers. In three years, bringing him to three and thirty, he was in and out of half-a-dozen situations, always at about the same level of drab and listless incompetency; at thirty-five he drifted into what had the appearance of permanency—a desk in the office of Miller & Crowdale, the house and estate agents.

Here he earned two pounds a week and here, which exactly suited him, nothing was demanded of him. He merely sat in the office from nine-thirty to one and from one-forty-five to six and entered up properties in ledgers or copied them out of ledgers for the information of clients. It was not an employment at which it was easy to make mistakes, or in which mistakes, if they were made, could be very serious. It was just the donkey work of the business and it was useful to Messrs. Miller & Crowdale to have a proper donkey to do it. Sharp young juniors, by whom previously to his coming it had been performed, very soon showed aptitude for more alert and intelligent duties, taking inventories, attending auction sales, sizing up values and the like, and then had to be promoted and other smart young juniors found and initiated in their places. Decidedly it was useful to have at the job, a steady, dull, middle-aged man who did no more than he was wanted to do and for doing it wanted no more than he got.

Hector, therefore, suited, was himself well suited, stayed on and was likely to stay on. He had, in addition to his two pounds a week, some ninety pounds a year from investments inherited under his father's will. He had no tastes. His only expenditure was his lodging. He bought clothes only when he came through those he was wearing.

At forty Bywash was perfectly suited by his years. He had never been a boy and he had never been a youth. In boyhood the qualities of boyhood, and in youth the qualities of youth, had been expected of him and he had never been able to produce those qualities. At forty nothing was expected of him and that suited him precisely. At forty he never used a clothes-brush and not every day a razor. At forty, looking upon his purposeless mien, his vacant eyes and his neglected mind, one might say that the Creator, with high and ardent hopes planning in his own image the young body and the young mind that first had been here, had faltered in his interest and abandoned it and gone away. At forty Mr. Bywash had no vices and no virtues. He was merely negligible. Nothing interested him, nothing caused his pulses to quicken. The result of the Derby or of the boat-race, the sonnets of Wordsworth, the spires of Tidborough Cathedral springing up into the sky, the bustle and gleam of Tidborough's commercial streets by night when pleasure and business were abroad, or May or October arranging their glories upon the countryside—these things were nothing to Mr. Bywash. Nothing was anything to Mr. Bywash.

And suddenly, at forty, thus circumstanced, thus equipped, and thus inclined, astounding and tremendous things began to happen to him.

III

THEY began with the very beginning of his annual fortnight's holiday taken in this forty-first year of his age!—poignant and mysterious and terrific and frightful things; emotions that presented at white heat all those ardent emotions he should have known in his youth and never had known; emergencies that called for all those powerful qualities of mind and muscle, of action and of courage, which in his young manhood he should have developed and husbanded and of which he never had so much as considered the use, let alone practised and encouraged.

He took this holiday, as he had taken twenty before it, at the great seaport town of Stormouth, an hour's run from Tidborough on the main line from London. Bywash waited on the platform for the down train. No one, observing him, would have supposed he was holiday-bound. He went on holiday as he went about everything else—without the smallest enthusiasm. His way of spending it was to take a cheap room and either to lounge through the day within doors if the weather was dull, or to droop listlessly about the Prince's Park or on the sea front if the weather was fine.

The train roared in. Everybody quickened up and bustled. People greeted

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About midday the woman appeared. . .

people or took leave of people. People rushed about looking for accommodation. People alighted and charged about after luggage. Boys bawled newspapers and refreshments. Porters thundered trucks toward and away from the baggage vans. The engine contributed a tremendous and spectacular din of escaping steam. Mr. Bywash, the sole emotionless figure, merely drifted toward the coach that had halted nearest him and drifted in. He scarcely noticed the occupants whom he joined beyond that they were two, a man and a woman, seated side by side opposite him and at the farther corner. The train started. He looked out of the window against which he sat. The train rushed on. He remained looking out—seeing, for all that the countryside conveyed to his mind, as much or as little as if a blank wall had flanked the permanent way.

WHEN the train had run about twenty minutes he altered his position and made to look across the carriage through the farther window. Then he noticed his companions. The man was a huge obese creature with a heavy brutish face. He was got up in a horsey way. He was of the rough publican or book-maker type. He had enormous hands, great, big, red sledge-hammer hands. His mouth was tightly pursed as though he desired to show that he had no intention of speaking. His face held the expression of a malevolent and threatening smile as though there were some ferocious power he had that in his chosen time he would exercise. The whole bulk and coarseness and brutality of the man vaguely frightened Mr. Bywash; the heavy and ferocious aspect of him was, to Mr. Bywash, like smelling a bad and sinister odor—it made him feel uncomfortable, alarmed.

——Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones——

Some people are susceptible to that kind of thing. Mr. Bywash, far from apprehending messages in nature, had never even the curiosity to read stories in faces, But this savage man's dominating and repellent mien— Why was his mouth thus pursed as though to show he would not speak? Why in his horrible face that cynical presentment of triumph, of power, that in his chosen time he would exercise? Why? Uncomfortable, apprehensive, fascinated, Mr. Bywash slid his eyes to the ferocious man's companion, to the woman, —and knew why, and knew, immediately and poignantly, extraordinary and mysterious and terrible and immoderately alarming sensations.

She was slightly twisted in her seat so that her face was upturned beneath the man's face. Her face was pale. It was pale with a creamy pallor, and it had eyes of dim gray, gray with the pearl and exquisite grayness of the last film that lifts above the dawn, and shining stuff about the lower lids. ("Tears!" thought Mr. Bywash dreadfully. "Tears! Oh my, she's crying!") And she had soft black hair, low on her temples and upon her brow, as shadows on white roses, that stirred and lifted in the window's breeze like fronds gently waving in the depths of some clear pool. And she was talking, talking, talking. She was *imploring*.

That was it. That, with the beauty of her sad face was what caused these frightful feelings in Mr. Bywash's heart. She was imploring, imploring, imploring. Ceaselessly, piteously, frantically. Mr. Bywash could not hear what she was saying. She was speaking very low, and there was the rushing noise of the train. Scarcely the murmur of her tone was discernible to him. But all too frightfully clear the fact that she was begging, begging, imploring, entreating. It explained the pursed-up lips of that huge and ferocious man. She was imploring a word from him and he would not speak a word. It explained that horrible look of his of triumph and of power that in his chosen time he would exercise. She was in terror of that triumph, in pitiable dismay of that power.

MR. BYWASH watched; and watched with all these mysterious and frightful and never before experienced feelings swelling and surging within him, and causing him fear (which he had often felt, but never for such a reason), an aching pity, which he never in his life had felt for anybody, and bewildering, dizzying emotions —yearnings, longings, cravings, high desires of knight errantry, of brave and reckless actions, actions which all the women of situations he had ever seen, or all he had ever read or ever thought, had never caused him even to imagine. Awful sensations. And caused him a separate and most terrible agony, which, appalling in its own individual stress, also roared into white heat (as draft upon a furnace) these frightful flames of pity and of that incredible, dreadful emotion of—whatever it was that the face of the woman caused within him.

Regret was this separate and most

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For one tiny instant he forgot his fears and was almost brave.

terrible agony. Regret, realization, mortification. Regret, realization, mortification for what and of what all he had never been and now could never become, all he had missed and now never could recover—all he now was, the nerveless, negligible entity he was and that he knew he looked—and all the fine and shining and valorous things that, in the furnace of these emotions, he most terribly desired to be.

He cried inwardly, he could have cried it aloud, "Oh, dear me!"

He thought "What would I not be? Oh, what am I?"

There answered him that mock which in his boyhood had so tortured him. The rhythm of the train blared it defiantly and exultingly at him, over and over again, thumping it out, smashing it in:

> Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules,
> Of HECTOR and Lysander, and such great names as these——

"Oh, my goodness!" He could have jumped out of the train. He could. He could. "Yes, if you had the pluck!"

THESE new and frightful emotions that he was suffering had out of their womb conceived within him an articulate entity that could talk, and that was the first thing it said. "Yes, you could jump out of the train to stop that song and to murder your shame, you could jump out and end it—if you had the pluck. Ha, ha! If you had the pluck!"

And while he writhed it went on: "And if you had the pluck to jump out, Bywash, you wouldn't want to jump out. If you had the pluck to do that, you'd have the pluck to do splendid things here in the carriage, and you'd have the physical appearance and the physical strength that go with pluck. You'd get up. You'd somehow intervene. You'd interfere. If need be, you'd strike that hulking brute. You'd protect that poor creature. You'd take her. She'd turn to you, Bywash. She'd admire you, she'd turn to you, she'd cling to you, she'd love you. You'd take her away. She'd be yours, your own. Yours, your darling, and you her dearly loved, her hero—if you had the pluck, Bywash. If only you hadn't been what you've always been. If only you had known the things in life you've never known. If only you hadn't missed all

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you've missed. If only you hadn't become what you have become. If only you were your brother Harry, Bywash, or your brother Tom. If only—but listen to the train, Bywash, you're not hearing it. Listen:

Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules,
Of HECTOR and Lysander and such great
names as these——

He said between his lips "Oh, my God!"

SHE was still and ceaselessly at it, imploring, beseeching; and the man basilisk, imperturbable, cynical, sinister, with never a word, with only that abominable indifference, with only that reserved ferocious threat. Anon she would pause as it were in exhaustion of despair, and shrink away into herself, and Bywash would see, and tremble to see, all her wrought up spirit, as it were, dissolve away in a terrible sigh, and that shining stuff upon her lower lids fill and discharge itself in a swift crystal flash down her cheeks; and in a moment she would start, as though in horror of the flying moments that she had suffered to fly empty, and urge herself toward him again and urge again that desperate prayer, that most piteous entreaty. Once she slid her hand—Bywash saw a wedding-ring upon it—slid her hand timidly upon those enormous red, swollen, sledge-hammer hands of the man—the gentlest and most touching motion of timid appeal. He jerked up the great fist she had touched and threw her hand violently back upon her lap. The action tore Mr. Bywash to the quick; and it did other—it frightened him anew of the man. Those terrific sledge-hammer hands, the sight of them and the thought of the terrific things they could do, alarmed him even more than the man's ferocious face alarmed him. They would be the horrible and terrible instruments of all the horrible and terrible violences that Bywash apprehended in the monster.

"Interferel" mocked the new voice within Mr. Bywash. "Look at those butcher hands of his and interfere. Go on!"

Bywash cowered in his seat, abject.

Once while he stared, and while in the dank and marshy recesses of his soul, like one entombed and frantically searching escape, he wildly sought for sparks of courage, once while he so stared and sought, the man looked up and caught his eye and directed upon him a full look, and Mr. Bywash with lightning swiftness dropped his eyes and turned away his head, and louder than before the beaten rhythm of the train greeted him:

—and some of Hercules,
Of HECTOR and Lysander and such great
names as these——

He groaned between his lips.

In a little he screwed up courage to look again; and he watched, now wary and ready to slip away his eyes at an instant's warning. "Imagine it," mocked the voice, "Imagine it, you daren't even be caught watching!" And once—and this was the most frightful and bitterest moment of all—once the woman ceased her entreaty and made with her hands a little frantic motion of despair and looked swiftly all about the carriage in obvious quest of some one's help. And Bywash was the only other in the carriage. And her eyes just fleeted a moment on his face—fleeted and were gone and she made again that little frantic motion of despair.

Oh, bitterest and most frightful moment of all! That glance at him and that immediate turning away from him! As her face had been a mirror he saw in that action of hers his negligible and useless self. If only he had been Tom, if only he had been Harry, if only he had been any other than this that he had become ——

He cried himself "Oh, my God!" He strained within himself anew for any—any—spark of courage. He looked at the man's face and at those awful hands, and there was no single, tiny bit of courage that he could find.

IV

THE train ran into Stormouth terminus. He leaned from the window to turn the handle of the door. It was too stiff for his feeble wrist. He never before had noticed how puny were his arms. He made to add his other hand to the task. The man pushed him unceremoniously aside, flicked open the door without an effort and stepped out. The woman followed him. Her skirts brushed Bywash. Her knees touched his. It was the first contact with a woman that he had even so much as noticed. It thrilled him terribly, terribly. He made a most frightful effort. He said, and knew it as he said it for the ludicrous squeak that it was; he said, "Can I help you?"

She didn't hear. How should she, terrified as he had been lest the man should hear? She didn't hear. She was gone. She was passing up the platform in the man's wake.

Was he to let her go like this? Oh, not after these terrible and mysterious emotions, this amazing and frightful feeling toward her, that had come at him like unsuspected flame bursting through a suddenly opened door. Oh, not after that! Oh, not with this upon him—these tumults, these revelations, these visions of one tremendous act of glorious courage, these transports of what would then be won—a look, a touch, a word, a bond with her——

Poignant and mysterious things were happening to him; enormous and terrible things were looming up before him. They utterly dismayed him but they ungovernably fascinated him. He had baggage but he let it go. He stumbled out of the train and he pressed anxiously through the busy platforms and he followed the pair, out into the street and through many streets.

The man was walking much too fast for the woman. There was in his great pressing stride and in the massive hulk of his huge shoulders the same air of vengeful purpose and of biding power that his frontal mien in the train had presented; there was in her agitated hurrying and in the droop of her slender figure the same pitiable appeal that first had wrung these frightful tumults out of Mr. Bywash's heart. And she was being hurried to her doom! He would get her within doors somewhere and then——

Mr. Bywash followed along, keeping safely behind and hating himself for his caution. What was he going to do? He didn't know. But he was nerving himself to do something and he was knowing as he tried that in all his composition there was nothing wherewith he could nerve himself. He was experiencing all those ardent longings and all those valorous aspirations which spring in young manhood, and which young manhood from the selfsame sap and root arms and maintains—and he never had had any young manhood! He was an island castaway come upon fabulous treasure and without means to enjoy it. He had suffered to pass, without garnering from them, the harvests of the years; he now was come to his barns avid for corn and they were empty.

The passage of the pair he followed was through the densely housed and grimy streets of Stormouth's commercial quarter. Mr. Bywash lost his bearings after some fifteen minutes of many crossings. He recovered them again as he found himself approaching the district in which lay that Prince's Park where it had been his habit on former visits to lounge away the hours listening to the band. The couple turned down a street he remembered walking on his way to the Park. The houses here were in a solid row on either side. Their doors opened directly onto the pavement, by two steps but without approaches. Before one such door the pair halted. Mr. Bywash abruptly halted also a dozen houses behind. The man opened the door with a key. Mr. Bywash made a great effort at his nerves and came a few paces on. The man went up the steps and in. It smote terribly at Bywash's heart that the woman hesitated, faltered. The man turned and caught her arm, dragging her roughly. Mr. Bywash was trembling; but he advanced. As he came abreast of the door it was swung to. He stood there trembling, literally and positively shaking in every articulation of his body; far worse, quivering in his soul.

He had had a glimpse before the door swung; a long narrow passage, on the left a room belonging to the window against the entrance by which he stood, at the end a flight of stairs. He could hear things. He heard heavy steps up the passage and the stairs creak. He could see things. A darkening behind the curtain of the window told him that one had entered the room. The man had gone up-stairs; the woman was in the room. He looked at the door. His heart thudded with a sound that he could hear. The door had not latched. It was open! Even as he looked, it began to move in a widening aperture.

He did a most appalling thing.

HE CREPT within the door and stood in the passage. He was shaking with fear. Overhead were violent movements. In the room beside him was sobbing. He had only one coherent thought: "I'm mad. I shall be killed!" He went into the room. She was collapsed upon a couch, her arms over its back, her head bowed on her arms, sobbing. He stood there. He was shaking with terror.

She looked up. She sprung to her feet. "Oh, what is it? Who are you? What do you want?"

He was so shaking, he was so strained with listening for approach from above, his condition was altogether so frightful: that he could not speak, not for a full minute while she stared upon him in amazement. Then he stammered: "Can I help you?"

"Who are you? Who are you?"

"I was in the train with you."

"But what do you *want?* What are you doing here? I don't understand. What is it you *want?*"

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"I was in the train. I saw what was going on with you. I——"

Her eyes were round and staring in utter incomprehension She struck her hands together, bewildered, agitated. "But what do you *want?*"

The moments were flying. He seemed to have been hours in this frightful and perilous position. At any instant might come descent upon the stairs. He was shaking. He heard his teeth knock together. He said, "I want to help you."

She understood. Her eyes that had been wide enlarged yet more. He knew perfectly well her thought—the utterly absurd and futile spectacle that he presented! If only he had been like Tom! If only he were like Harry! He knew perfectly well her thought; and she spoke and gave him her thought in its stark and dreadful bitterness. She said: "You—*You*—you must be mad—you *must* be."

It was awful to hear. His face twitched. He said with a catch in his voice. "I know. I know. But I want to. I want to. I saw you. I couldn't bear it. I felt for you. I want to. I want to."

And wider yet her eyes.

Then she made a quick step to him and put her hands on his wrists and pressed him away. "Go! Go! Go at once. While you can. You are mad, mad to be here."

She was terrified for him and her terror joined and frightfully augmented his own. But she was touching him. Her hands were on his hands, her face close to his, the faint, stirring perfume of her flesh all about him; and touch and face and perfume thrilling him as he had never imagined one could be thrilled. He stood his ground. For one tiny instant, as a man in flush of wine, he forgot his fears and was almost brave. He stood his ground. "I want to help you. I want to."

She stood away and wrung her hands. "Oh, what can you do? What can you do? *You?* Go! Go! He'll kill you. He'll kill you."

And terror struck across her face. "Listen!"

The change in her countenance, and that hissed, dreadful word, sheerly terrified him. Frozen, he listened. Sounds on the stairs!

"Go! For God's sake go!"

He turned and fled.

HIS thoughts went: Still, he had done it. Craven in that headlong, scrambling flight of his to the lowest crypt and abyss of pusillanimity—still, he had done it. He had gone in. He had spoken to her. He had said he had come to help her. He had gone in. Surely that was brave? Surely it was? Yes, it was. He had done that much, that terrific and appalling much (he shuddered even at recalling how terrific and appalling it had been). He had done that much. He was not utterly, not utterly, abandoned. By that shocking and unspeakable flight there was confirmed to him all those lamentable exposures of himself which had begun to be revealed in the railway carriage. He was a wretched thing and no man. He knew it now. In all his years of life till now he had neither known what he was nor would have cared had he known. Now he knew; and he cared—he cared—how he cared!

Still, he had done it—still he had done it—he clung on to that.

When his headlong panic from the house and from the street had removed him from the vicinity of danger his thought had been of his immediate situation and of his next steps. He went to the station and at the parcels' office was able to claim his abandoned bag. He carried it to the street of his adventure, and from the corner timidly surveyed the road. In the fanlight of quite a number of the houses the notice "Apartments" was to be seen. There was the place, just by that lamp standard. He walked down toward it on the opposite side. He dared not go immediately opposite. He might be seen. "Apartments" was exhibited in the house three doors above that point. He inquired for a room, stipulating it must overlook the street, and obtained it.

He seated himself in the window and watched.

Early on the following morning, still watching, he saw the man come out. The man could not possibly see him; but he caught his breath and shrunk away deeper behind the curtain. How huge he looked! How brutal! Those frightful hands of his swinging by his sides! Bywash did not recover free breathing until the awful man was around the corner and out of sight.

About midday the woman appeared. She carried a shopping-bag. He took up his hat in a trembling hand and went down-stairs and followed.

She made purchases in two or three shops. He kept away on the farther side, his eyes adoring. Now she passed away from the shopping street. Her direction became the direction of the park. If only she were to go there! She was! She was! She entered and he followed.

She went to a secluded seat and took it; and Bywash went up to her.

Now, now began the amazing weeks! Now life, as a walled city opening its gates to one all night without, raised its portals, and Mr. Bywash walked in.

V

FOR a long period into that first meeting her part was solely of utter incomprehension. She simply could not understand Mr. Bywash, and he was so manifestly the futile creature he looked that she made no pretense of not understanding him. She might have been afraid of his approaches; but no living creature could possibly be afraid of Mr. Bywash. She might have been indignant at his presumption; but his extraordinary manner forbade any such indignation. She might have felt toward him any of the variously outraged feelings that a young woman would have toward a strange man who pursued her; but Mr. Bywash, though a stranger, was not a man.

That was just it. He was so utterly and fatuously out of keeping with the part he seemed to be playing. And what *was* the part he was playing? She simply could not comprehend. She absolutely could not understand. Over and over again, she said to him, he standing there before her—such an object, and, agonizingly aware of what an object he was—over and over again she said, "But I don't *understand*. I simply can't. What is it you *want? Why* are you speaking to me? I can't understand."

And he couldn't explain. He could only stammer perfectly meaningless things. He wanted to say all sorts of things, and couldn't say them. He was suffering all sorts of emotions, manifested by a lump in his throat, by mistiness before his eyes, and he could not possibly express them. And she kept on with that "But what is it you *want? Why* are you speaking to me?"—telling him as plainly as if she were saying it what a ludicrous and utterly negligible fool he looked.

Weak tears came into his weak eyes. She saw them. She said quickly, "I *am* so sorry; I really am; but really I simply can not understand. I can't. Believe me, how sorry I am."

He had to wipe his eyes. This kind note in her voice. It worsened his plight.

He said, "The truth is just that I want to talk to you. I've never spoken to a woman in my life before. I saw you in that carriage yesterday and I saw how wretched you were and I felt—I simply can't tell you how I felt for you. I've never felt sorry for any one, or cared in the least what happened to any one in all my life before. I felt for you—I can't tell you. I can't explain it even to myself—how it happened so suddenly, how I felt it so frightfully. I can't tell you. I wanted to interfere, to say something, somehow to help you. I didn't dare. You can see what I am. You saw yesterday when I bolted out of your house what I am. It's no good trying to hide it. You can see for yourself. Any one can. I wanted to interfere. I didn't dare. I followed you. I had to. I've told you why. It was just what came over me so frightfully when I looked up at you in the carriage. So I had to follow. And then I went in. I did do that. Of course I bolted. I bolted directly I heard him coming. It's no good trying to hide what I am. But that I did go in—that shows you, I do hope it shows you, how frightfully I felt for you, how frightfully I do feel for you."

He ended: "That's all. It's just what I've tried to tell you. It's just that I've never spoken to a woman in my life—oh, do please let me talk to you. It's incredible that I can be of any help to you. But you never know. Perhaps I can. Oh, if only I could——"

She said: "Oh, do sit down. It's extraordinary, this. Even now I can't quite—But indeed I do thank you very much for wanting to help me. I'm glad to talk to you. If you were any one else I shouldn't dare. But you—it doesn't seem to matter with you. You don't mind my saying that, do you? It really doesn't seem to matter. And I *am* glad to talk to you. There's no one I'm ever allowed to talk to. When you saw me in the carriage—you want to know about that, don't you?—when you saw me I'd been running away. It was the second time I'd tried. He came after me and caught me. He was bringing me back."

Mr. Bywash said: "He looked as though he was going to—. Does he b—" he could hardly frame the dreadful word. "Does he beat you?"

SHE pushed back to the elbow the sleeve of one arm. He saw bruisings, scars. He writhed in his seat. If only he had been like Tom! If only he were Harry! If only he were any other than this that he was!

They began, from then, to meet every day. They began to spend, in the park, all of every day together. She told him

(*Continued on page 105*)

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In Red *and* Gold

A Romance of the Greatest River

By Samuel Merwin

Author of "Temperamental Henry," "The Hills of Han," etc.

III

CHAPTER FIVE

Resurgence

THE upper-deck passengers awoke in the morning to find the engines still at rest, and the now familiar view of Kiu Kiang still to be seen from portside windows; the *Yen Hsin* had merely been moved a hundred yards or so below the landing-hulk.

There was grumbling about the breakfast table. The captain did not appear. The huge mate was preoccupied; explaining with grave courtesy that he had no further news. He assumed that orders to proceed to Hankow would be forthcoming during the day. It was understood now that the republican troops were everywhere protecting white folk and, in any event, the foreign concessions up the river were well guarded by the war-ships.

The outstanding fact was that they were to spend at least another night on the river. The sensible thing to do, or so decided the younger men, was to have a dance. Accordingly, before tiffin, committees were hard at work planning decorations for the social hall. Miss Means proved a fertile source of entertaining ideas. And it was agreed, during the day, that Miss Andrews had a pretty taste at hanging flags.

The Chinese day begins with the light. And little Mr. Kato, sitting smilingly through breakfast, had already passed hours among his below-decks acquaintances. After breakfast he sat outside with the Kanes, senior and junior, talking rapidly. There Miss Carmichael observed them; later, when Rocky stood by the rail throwing brass cash down into the crowding, clamorous sampans of the water beggars, she strolled his way—looking incredibly young in her blue middy blouse and short skirt—carrying a book from the boat's library, a thin finger between the pages.

She smiled at the quarreling beggars below. But he, at sight of her, grew sulky, swung around.

"You didn't come last night," he said, very low, his voice thick with suddenly rising feeling.

"No, I couldn't. You can't always plan things."

"Well, you said——"

"Rocky, please! You mustn't talk like that. We can be seen."

"Well—" he closed his lips. It was the first time she had called him by his name. That seemed something. And she was right; they must keep up appearances. He felt that she was extremely clever; living her own life, as a business woman, away out here, doing as she chose, like a man, never losing her head for a moment. Well, he would show her that he could be a sport.

"Kato picked up some queer news this morning, prowling around. There's a mutiny brewing below decks. He hasn't got all the facts yet. He's down there now. It's the Viceroy's soldiers. First thing we know they'll be blowing up the boat."

He was gloomy about it; boyishly turning his heavy burden of self-pity and reproach into the new channel.

"Well," said she, "we'll all have to take our chances, I suppose;" and moved away a step, pausing and balancing gracefully on the balls of her feet and smiling at him.

"Wait," he muttered—"don't go!"

"It's better. No good in our being seen too much together——"

"Too much?"

"I'll save you some dances to-night."

"A lot! All of them!"

She smiled again at this outburst; said, "We can visit afterward, anyhow," and moved away.

On the other side of the deck she found the Manila Kid leaning in a doorway, moodily chewing a match. His listless eyes at once sought her wrist.

"You're not wearing it," he muttered.

"You know why, Jim."

"Sure! Young Kane."

"Oh, Jim, where are your brains? Don't try to tell me that Tex hasn't seen that watch. Well, do you want him to know there's something between us—just now——"

"I don't know's I——"

HER pale, cool eyes swept the deck. Then she leaned beside him; opened her book, then looked out over it at the river beyond; smiled in her easy way.

"Jim, why didn't you tell me that Tex has started this thing without me?"

"I've been watching for a chance to."

She considered this. He went on:

"I've been trying to figure out how we stand. I didn't quite get you last night. Tex and his boy Tom have got a bunch of the soldiers now. But they're moving careful because there's another show been started. One of the regular revolutionary crowd is below there stirring 'em up. Some of 'em are full of this republic idea, want to die for it and all that stuff, and Tex has to move cautious to buy 'em off. Say, what does he want so many for?"

"The more the better."

"But how're you going to pay 'em?"

"Let them loot."

"But Tex and Tom are promising them part of the real stuff. Jewels."

"Oh, you'd probably have to promise. But when they get into it, with plenty of liquor and women, it'll be easy enough to get away from them."

"But how're you going to keep 'em in hand before that? Do you know what some of 'em are whispering around now? They want to carve up the boat. Come right up here and go through the Viceroy's outfit."

THE STORY

ON BOARD a river steamer, leaving Shanghai in 1911 for a voyage up the Yangtze-Kiang, are brought together Dawley Kane, an American millionaire; his son, Rocky Kane, a much-spoiled society youth; Braker, the financier's secretary, and a Japanese traveling assistant; Miss Andrews, an American girl, and her older companion, Miss Means; three notorious characters of the China Coast, Tex Connor, The Manila Kid—and a girl, Dixie Carmichael. Soon after the start, Connor and the Kid draw young Kane and others into a card game, which the mate of the steamer, Griggsby Doane, quietly and forcefully breaks up. By way of substitute diversion the Kid then arranges a boxing match between a Chinese "prizefighter" and Doane. Doane consents to take part, understanding that the bout is only to afford a little exercise for him and amusement for the men. It proves to be an occasion for gambling on the result and for a disgusting fight, against a foul opponent, whom Doane is compelled to knock out. In the fight Doane's physical strength and force of personality impress every one, including the elder Kane. The Viceroy of Nanking, who has come aboard later with his daughter and retinue, is present at the fight; he afterward invites Doane to luncheon. Rocky Kane, during the fight, attempts, in a chance encounter on deck, a brutal flirtation with a Chinese girl who he does not know is the daughter of the Viceroy, later sending her an insulting clandestine note, which comes to the captain. Doane goes to his cabin to warn him and finds him smoking opium.

At the luncheon with the Viceroy are revealed something of Doane's past and of the Viceroy's unhappy position in the new currents of Chinese life, where, like Doane in relation to his own land America, he stands between two worlds, the old and the new. At the end he meets the Viceroy's daughter, Hui Fei, who asks to see him later alone. A disguised young Chinese revolutionist on board later also asks Doane's aid in their plans. At Kiu Kiang, where the steamer stops, two deserting soldiers of the Viceroy are shot; there are rumors of outbreaks up the river. While the steamer is held up, Dixie Carmichael learns the meaning of all this through young Kane, and tries to get Tex Connor and the Manila Kid to plan a raid on the priceless collection of jewels at the Viceroy's ancestral home. Hui Fei, meeting Doane, tells him her father is returning there to take his life in obedience to the orders of the dissolute and tottering Imperial Court who fear his Western sympathies. He is moved by the tragic situation, and even more by her beauty, and promises her aid.

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"But he hasn't much stuff here, Jim. We've got bigger game than that."

"I know—and anyway it'd bring a gunboat down on us. That's what Tex is trying to make Tom see. Tom's in Tex's room now. But my God, Dixie, when I think of what you've started in that off-hand way of yours. . . . "

"Tex'll hold them down, Jim. That's one good thing about him, he's not weak. You're nervous. Go in and help the teachers hang flags. That'll soothe you. If there's any news for me, better send me a chit by a boy."

THE KID looked mournfully at her. He was grotesque, this Jim Watson, tall, angular, thin bony face under the tipped-back cap, bald salients running up into his hair on either side the plastered-down front locks. And as he gazed on this wisp of a girl who had slipped mysteriously in among the adroit swindlers and adventuresses of the coast but a few brief years back and had from the very beginning cleverly made her way, his disorganized spirit yearned toward her. She had brains, and used them. She knew how to be nice to a fellow, and the Kid hungered for sympathy. And she was piquantly desirable; in part because men sought her without success. Excepting perhaps that young naval officer at Hong Kong, the name of no man had been seriously linked with hers.

The Kid knew, as he so moodily surveyed her, that her sympathy—the word was his own—could be bought only at a high price. The price, indeed, frightened him. He couldn't think along with Dixie and Tex. Nor could he easily conceive of opposing Tex, for the man was strong and merciless. Still——

"See here, Dixie, if I wasn't so fool crazy over you, do you think for a minute I'd let you drag me into this kind of a mixup? Why, my God!—when I got to thinking about it last night—the risks you're running——"

"It's big stakes, Jim. You can't expect a million to fall into your lap. Got to play for it. Tell me—does this Tom Sung understand English?"

"Of course! He was a farm laborer in California, and a cook in the U. S. Navy. Why?"

"I may have to talk to him myself before we get through with it."

"Of course you know Tex means to rob you?"

"Of course," said she, smiling a little for the benefit of a customs man who appeared up forward. "You run along now, Jim. This is no game for weak nerves. Remember, I need you."

"Well—just this——"

"Careful!"

"—You listen, now! You won't find me getting cold feet——"

"I'm sure of that."

"And I ain't afraid o' Tex Connor, either! If you mean that I've got to go up against him— Well, say, look here! If I go through—if I do everything you say—how're we going to stand, you and me?"

"I let you give me the watch, didn't I?"

"Well—that's all right—but I asked you once to go to the Islands with me, and you wouldn't."

"Not over there. I know too many people."

"Well, somewhere else, then! Tell me straight, now! If we pull this off—shake down a real pile—will you go with me?"

She looked thoughtfully at him for a brief moment; then turned again to the river.

"You know I'm fond of you, Jim."

"It's a trade, Dixie? If I stick to you, you'll stick to me?"

She considered this; finally, very quietly, barely parting her lips, replied, simply—

"Yes."

He drew in his breath with a whistling sound.

She added, then—

"Careful, Jim! I know how you feel, but don't let yourself talk."

"I know, Dix, but my God! When I think of how you've kept me dancing this year—and now——"

"I'll say this, Jim. Just this. If you knew everything about Tex Connor——"

"You mean, he's tried to——"

"I mean certain things he's said to me. If you're as fond of me as that, you'd understand why I've felt, once or twice, like killing him. That man is a devil, Jim."

Then she slipped away.

II

AFTER tiffin Miss Carmichael was stretched comfortably in her deck-chair, reading, or seeming to, when Connor appeared, strolling along the deck, hands deep in pockets, chewing the inevitable Manila cigar. He wore a neat cap, and his large person was clothed in an outing suit of gray flannel. On his feet were shoes of whitened leather with rubber soles. To any but a shrewd student of physiognomy he might have passed for a prosperous American business man or politician of the bluff Western sort. He ought to have a woman to tell him, Dixie thought, that he was altogether too stout to wear a Norfolk jacket.

"Sit down?" she asked.

He dropped into the chair beside her.

"Looks as if we'd be hung up here till night anyhow," he said gruffly. "All foolishness, too. It's safe enough between here and Hankow. The Jardine boat came down this morning. And we land at the concessions—don't have to go clear up to the city." He drummed on the chair; shifted his cigar. "I can't hang around here. Got to get up to Peking before they close off the railroad."

She listened quietly to this little tirade; then remarked—

"Thought over my proposition, Tex?"

"What proposition? Oh, that scheme? Sure, I've thought it over. Nothing in it, Dix."

"Why not?"

"Too complicated. Did you ever see a lot of soldiers on the loose—their killing blood up? You could never handle 'em in the world."

"Oh, of course," said she, "if you tried any coarse work. But I wouldn't pin that on you, Tex."

"It's easy to talk." Connor's voice rose slightly; he noted the fact himself; paused, and spoke with greater deliberation. "But I wouldn't tackle a game like that. It ain't practical. Anyhow, Dix, I wouldn't go it blind. I'd have to know where I was going every minute. If you wanted to talk real business, it might be different. I might see a way to start something. But even at that"—he got heavily to his feet. "No, the thing for me's to stick to my own line."

He was moving slowly away when her slow light voice brought him up short.

"Tex," she said, "you're just a cheap liar after all, I see."

Then she watched the color sweep over his face. It was something to stir that wooden countenance with genuine emotion. She found a perverse thrill in the experience.

He stood motionless for a long moment. Finally he said, none too steadily—

"You know what would happen to a man that said that to me."

"What would you do? Shoot? Where would that get you? No, Tex, listen! Sit down here."

But he stood over her.

"I know everything you're doing."

"Oh—you do?"

"You're crossing me. But you can't get away with it. You know where you are—in China! And you're tampering with the troops of the Viceroy of Nanking. My God, Tex, haven't you *any* brains? Did you really think I'd show my hand?"

He chewed the cigar in silence, staring down.

"I'll give you your choice," she went on. "You can work with me, fifty-fifty, or I'll have Tom Sung beheaded. And then you'll be out a meal-ticket. And all your expenses with Tom up to now. And the three thousand you lost to the Kanes."

"You don't know what you're talking about! I haven't even seen Tom Sung in twenty-four hours."

"That's another lie. He was in your room this morning."

"How do you know that? Say, if Jim Watson's been talking——"

"He hasn't, Tex. I've got my information—and there's a lot of it—from Kato the Japanese. Go and talk to him, if you like. Or to your friends, the Kanes."

Connor, the color gone from his face now, looked steadily down at her. Slowly he drew from an inner pocket a gold-mounted case of alligator skin and selected a fresh cigar, lighting it on the stump of the old. Finally he said:

"Dix, I'm taking some rough talk from you. But never mind—now. You say you know where the stuff is, but you won't tell me."

"Not—now. I'll keep that information to trade with, Tex."

"Well and good. I'll tell you that you can't get it without a little help from me. And you're not going to get it. Tell me where it is, and I'll put it through and split with you. It'll have to be pretty quick, too. If you won't, you don't get your loot. And if you give up my boy Tom——"

"What'll you do, Tex?" She was faintly smiling.

"Oh, I won't shoot you. I'll protect myself better'n that. But I'll run you off the coast. You'll have turned your last card out here."

To this she said simply nothing. For a moment her two eyes met his one. Then he strolled away. And the day passed.

III

DOANE stood by the rail in the dusk of early evening, looking in through the open doorway. The social hall was gay with flags, the dragon of China hung flat over

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the talking-machine with the American and British colors draped on either hand. The little teachers had on their brightest and best; Miss Andrews, in particular, wore a pink party gown that might have been made by a village dressmaker—or, more likely, by herself—and flushed prettily as she chatted with young Braker. The men were all in their dinner coats.

Dixie Carmichael, in the inevitable blue middy blouse, sat quietly reading in a corner. A strange creature, always imperturbably girlish. He had observed her casually on the boat and about the Astor House at Shanghai, and despite the curious tales that drifted along the coast—already the girl had acquired an almost legendary fame—he had never seen her other than discreetly quiet. Men who had observed her on the steamer from Hong Kong after the outraged British wives as good as drummed her out of town, asserted that she exhibited not so much as a ruffle of the nerves. A girl without emotion, apparently; certainly without a moral sense.

She had for a time managed a gambling-house on Bubbling Well Road, Shanghai, but this year seemed to be more active up Peking way. At least she had made several trips to the north. There were moments when her thin, nearly expressionless face bore a look of infinite age; yet she was young. It would be interesting, he reflected, to know of her home and her youth, of the remarkable deficiency (or the equally remarkable gift) that had sent her out alone, with her hair down her back, to pit her uncanny quickness of thought and her sordid purpose against the desperately clever rascals of the coast.

When again he passed the doorway they were dancing—a waltz. Dixie and young Kane were together. Miss Means, primmer than ever, moved about with a tall Australian. Braker was with little Miss Andrews. The others of the younger men danced humorously with one another. The Manila Kid stood lankily, gloomily, by the talking-machine, sorting records.

THERE was a bustling outside the farther door; musical voices; the shimmering of satin in the light; and the Viceroy came in, escorting his daughter and attended by all his suite.

At the sight of Miss Hui Fei as she appeared in the doorway and stepped lightly over the sill, Doane caught his breath. She wore an American costume, a gown of soft material in rose color trimmed with silver, the stockings and little slippers in silver as well. A girl at any college or suburban dance back home might have dressed like that. Her richly-black hair was parted on the side; masses of it waved carelessly down over her temples and part of the broad forehead. Her color was high, her eyes bright. The eagerly Western quality he had sensed in her was dominant now, triumphant as youth can be triumphant.

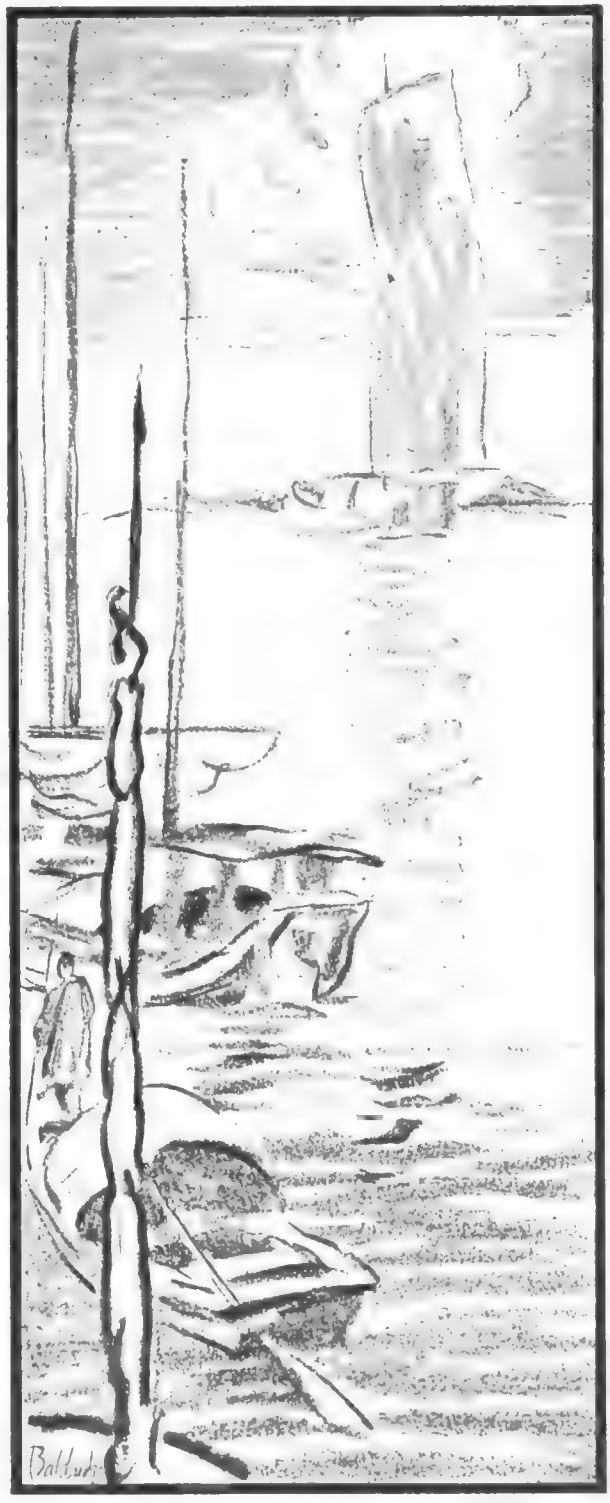
Doane, for a moment, pressed a hand to his eyes. He could not relate this radiantly Western girl with the quaintly Oriental figure he had last seen by moonlight on the boat deck. It was difficult, too, to understand her bright happiness.

Had her insistently modern spirit prevailed over her father's resolve to die? Or was she, after all, carried away by girlish spirits at the thought of a party? On the latter possibility Doane set his teeth; it raised thoughts of Oriental fatalism and surface adaptability that he could not face. Surely the girl who had talked so earnestly, who had so clearly exhibited a Western view of her father's predicament, was more than Oriental at heart.

The most deeply sobering thought, of course, was that he should so poignantly care. The mere sight of her thrilled him, shook him. All night and during this day he had been fighting the new shining sense of her in his heart; it was clear now that the battle was a losing one.

The pity of it seemed to him, even then, to be that he was possessed of such abounding vitality of body and mind. He felt a young man. He was never ill, never even tired. Only accident, he felt, could shorten his life. Certainly he wouldn't take it himself; he had gone all through that. He would have to go dully on and on; he was like an engine that is using but a fraction of its proper power. He had not known that his need was a woman until he met this woman. To no other, he knew, could he give the rich upwellings of emotion in his heart; and vital emotion, he had tragically learned three years earlier, can not be repressed indefinitely. There was a breaking-point. He was even now bringing up favorable arguments. This young woman, as she had admitted, like himself, stood between the worlds. She could never be happy in China; hardly out of it. If—if—thoughts came, bitter thoughts, of his years, of his poverty.

The thing had the grip of a possession. He had seen other men mad over one woman, and had pitied them; but now he—— He called himself, in his heart, a fool.



Sampans were edging into the circle of light about the steamer.

THE waltz was over. The Kid changed the records and wound the machine. An interpreter left the group of mandarins and spoke with one of the Australians; led the man back to his Excellency. A moment later the music sounded again, and the Australian danced lightly away with Miss Hui Fei in what Doane had no means of knowing was the very new one-step. He had never danced; plainly she loved it. She moved like a fairy—light, utterly graceful, her oval face, when she turned, flushed a little and soberly radiant.

Doane turned away. He did not know that his Excellency, glimpsing him outside there in the shadows, leaned forward and bowed; he did not observe (or care) that Dixie Carmichael was dancing with the German customs man, while Rocky Kane, gone suddenly white, lighting one cigaret on top of another, stood in a corner devouring hungrily with his eyes Miss Hui Fei.

A little later when the young man spoke there at his side, he started, for he had heard no one approach.

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IV

ROCKY was hatless; hair rumpled as if he had been running nervous fingers through it, cheeks deeply flushed, eyes staring rather wildly. He threw his cigaret overboard and squarely faced the huge man in blue.

"I don't know what you'll think of me," he began, in a breathless, unsteady voice; then his eyes wavered.

Doane turned with him. Dixie Carmichael stood in the doorway, watching them. Rocky, with a nervous gesture, as if he would brush her away, looked up again into the stern older face. He was plainly lost in himself, burning with the confused fires of youth.

"I don't know what you'll think of me"—he came again to a stop. Apparently the words, "Mr. Doane," would have completed the sentence, but failed for some reason to find voice. Perhaps it was the habit of his wealthy environment that restrained him even now from speaking with more than casual respect to a uniformed employe of a river line; yet contradictorily, here he was, all boyish humility! "I'm a damn fool, of course, I know that. But—you've seen her."

Doane glanced again toward the door. Dixie Carmichael had disappeared.

"No—not that one!" cried the boy hotly; then dropped his voice. "The girl in there! The—princess, isn't she?"

Doane inclined his head.

"Then she'd be the one I—well, you remember."

"She is the same. The Princess Hui Fei——"

"Hughie Fay? Like that?"

"Yes."

"What a lovely name! You—I know you won't understand! I guess you think I'm a pretty wild lot. I seem to have been trying about everything. But until tonight—oh, there's no use pretending I'm not hit all of a heap. I am. I never saw anything like her—never in my life. I don't know what the pater would say—me falling for a Chinese girl——"

"Manchu!"

"Well—same thing! Honest, I don't know how I could ever explain to him. But—you think I'm crazy, don't you."

"No."

"Perhaps I am. My head's racing. I get bewildered. Tell me—she was all Chinese the—the other time—all painted up. Big headdress with flowers on it. Why did she do that?"

"Out of respect to her father. The rouge and the headdress were according to Manchu custom." He looked directly down at the boy, and added, deliberately, "Veneration of parents is the finest thing in Chinese life. I sometimes think we have nothing so fine in America."

The boy's eyes fell. He mumbled—"Ouch! You landed there, I guess." Then he raised his eyes. "I can't help myself—whatever I am—but I can start fresh, can't I? That's what I'm going to do, anyhow—start fresh." He squared himself. His lip quivered. "Will you take me in there to the Viceroy, and translate my apology?"

Doane stood a moment in silence. Then he replied, quietly—"Yes." And led the way into the social hall. He found himself watching, like a spectator, the little scene—the Viceroy rising, with a quiet smile, a gentle old man, awaiting with perfect courtesy of bearing whatever might be forthcoming; Rocky Kane, seeming younger than before, with, in fact, the appearance of an excited boy, the wild look still in his eyes, but the face set with supreme determination. Doane observed now that he had a good forehead, wide and not too high. The nose was slightly aquiline, like his father's. The eyes, so dark now, were normally blue; the mouth sensitive; the skin notably fine in texture.

"Tell him"—thus the boy—"Tell him I acted like a dirty cad, that I know better, and—and ask his pardon."

Doane translated discreetly. A dance was just ending, and curious eyes were bent on the group. The mandarins stood behind the Viceroy, all gracefully at ease in their long, rich robes.

His Excellency, without relaxing that smile, replied in musical intonation.

"What is it?" asked Rocky Kane, under his breath, all quivering excitement—"what does he say?"

"That he accepts your apology, with appreciation of your manliness."

Young Kane's nervous frown relaxed at this. He was pleased.

"Will you—" he was saying now—"will you ask if I may dance with the princess?"

Doane complied. He felt now a strain of fineness in this ungoverned boy that was oddly moving to his own emotion-clouded brain, and reflected, in a swift uprush of tangled memory-moods, that he must have had a good mother. Hui Fei was approaching, young Braker at her side.

"He suggests"—Doane found himself translating—"that you ask her. He does not know what engagements she may have made."

The boy bit his lip. And then the princess was greeting the mate.

"It's nice to see you, Mr. Doane," she was saying. "I wondered if you weren' coming to the party."

It seemed to Doane that he could feel young Kane's devouring eyes fastened on her. The moment had come in which he must act. Braker, sensing a situation, thanked the princess and slipped away.

Quietly, Doane said—"Miss Hui Fei, this is Mr. Kane, who has asked permission to meet you."

She drew back a very little; Doane caught that; yet the courtesy of her race did not fail her. She inclined her pretty head; even smiled.

"Should I speak English?" asked the boy, out of sheer confusion; then—"Miss Hui Fei"—he was white; the words came slowly, almost coldly, between set teeth—"I am sorry for my rotten behavior the other night."

That was all. He waited. Miss Hui's smile faded. No Oriental could have come out so bluntly with it. Gradually the smile returned, and with it an air of courteous dismissal.

"I have forgotten it."

Young Kane gathered his courage.

"May I have a dance with you?"

For a moment the silence was marked. Perhaps Miss Hui was gathering herself as well. But it was only a moment; she spoke, smiling as if she were happy, her manner gracious, even kind—

"I am sorry. I have promise' every dance. The ladies are so few tonigh'."

That was all. The boy seemed somewhat slow in comprehending it. He stood motionless; then the color returned slowly to his face, flooding it. He bowed to her stiffly, then to her father, and rushed out on deck.

Miss Hui smiled up at the mate.

"I have save' the dance you ask'," she said, pleasantly. "It is this nex' one, if you don' mind."

The Manila Kid adjusted the needle and released the catch.

"I'm sorry," said Doane, as they moved away—"I don't dance."

The commonplace remark fell strangely on his own ears. It could hardly be himself speaking. He was all aglow with warm impulses.

"We'll sit it out," said Miss Hui, pleasantly.

And during the brief walk across the room, beside this buoyantly graceful girl, even while aware of the eyes upon him, he felt the magic wine of youth thrilling through his arteries. What a fairy she was! Snatches of poetry came; one—

"Were it ever so airy a tread."

—and lingered fragrantly after they were seated and he found himself looking down at her, listening with something of the gravity and kindliness of long habit when she so quickly spoke.

"Oh, I won't shoot you—but I'll run you off the coast."

CHAPTER SIX

Conflagration

A BEWILDERED, crushed Rocky Kane stood tightly holding the rail; staring down at the softly black water that ran so smoothly along the hull beneath; muttering in whispers that at intervals broke out into heated speech. This strange princess had humiliated him perfectly, completely; there had been nothing he could say, nothing to do but go; and she had let him go without a look or a further thought. He told himself it was unfair. He had swallowed his pride and apologized. Could a man do more?

But pressing upward through this chaotic mental surface of hurt pride and

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She wore an American costume . . . . a girl at any college or suburban dance back home might have dressed like that.

insistent self-justification came an equally insistent memory of his outrageous conduct toward her. As the moments passed, the memory intensified into a painfully vivid picture. His native intelligence, with the undeveloped decency that was somewhere within him, kept at him with dart-like, stinging thoughts. He had insulted, not only herself, but her race as well, in assuming a ruthless right to make free with her.

Then self-justification again; how could he know that she spoke English and dressed like the girls back home? Was it fair of her to masquerade like that?

He was miserably wrong, of course. And his nerves were upset. That was at least part of the trouble, his nerves; he lighted a cigaret to steady them. The match shook in his hand. This nervous trembling had been increasing lately; he found it an alarming symptom. Perhaps the trouble was inherent weakness. Ability like his father's often skipped a generation; and character. Yes, he was weak. He had failed at everything. His college career was a wreck; a monstrous wreck, he believed, echoes from which would follow him through life. To his incoherent brain it seemed that he had about all the vices—drinking, gambling, pursuing helpless girls, even smoking opium. His one faith had been money; but now he suddenly, wretchedly knew that even the money might fail him. It was as easy to toss away a million as a hundred on the red or the black. And then young men who wasted themselves acquired diseases from the terrors of which no fortune could promise release; a thought that had long dwelt uncomfortably in a sensitive, deep-shadowed corner of his brain—a brain that was racing now, beyond control.

Her unfairness lay in so publicly snubbing him. Her father knew the facts, as did Miss Carmichael, and the big mate, that old preacher with a mysterious past. Who was he, anyhow—setting up to regulate other people's lives?

Then rose among these turbulent thoughts a picture of the princess as she was now, there in the social hall. Tears welled into his eyes; he brushed them away, lighted a fresh cigaret and deeply inhaled the smoke. He had rushed out; suddenly, wildly, he desired to rush back. She was beautiful. She had quaint, moving charm. A rare little lady! It seemed almost that he might compel her to listen while he explained.

But what was it that he was to explain? That he was some other than the dirty sort they all knew him to be, that he had proved himself to be?

The wild thoughts were like a beating in his brain. It was his father's fault, this crazy nervousness, and his mother's. He hated that big mate. Self-pity rose like a tidal wave and engulfed him. He stared and stared at the softly dark water. Beginning with about his sixteenth year he had wrestled often with the thought of suicide, as so many sensitive young men do. Now the water fascinated him; it was so still, it moved so resistlessly on to the sea. "A pretty easy way to slip out. Just a little splash—I could climb down. Nobody'd know. Nobody'd care much of a damn. Oh, the old man would think he cared, but he wouldn't. He'll never make a bank president out of me. And that's all he wants."

A voice, guardedly friendly, said—

"Better not let yourself talk that way."

He turned with a start. Miss Carmichael was standing there. So he had talked aloud—another unpleasant symptom.

"You—you saw what——"

She inclined her head. "What's the good of letting it upset you? Lie down for a while. A pipe or two wouldn't hurt you. You're nervous as a witch. It would soothe you."

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He stared at her.

"Better lie down anyway," she said, taking his arm and moving him toward his cabin. "You don't want them to see you like this."

He yielded. His will was powerless. He dropped on the seat, while she lingered, almost sympathetically, in the doorway. Something of the influence she had been exerting on him—which had seemed to die when Miss Hui Fei entered the social hall—fluttered to life now. He found relief, abruptly, in recklessness.

"Come on in," he said huskily. "Have a pipe with me!"

Quietly, wholly matter-of-fact, she closed and locked the door.

"We'll shut the window too, this time," she said.

"You needn't turn on the light." He was reaching for his trunk. "Excuse me—a minute! I can see all right. I know just where everything is."

"Leave the trunk out," said she. "And lay your suitcase on it. Then we can put the lamp on that."

II

MISS HUI FEI led Doane to a seat under the curving front window.

"We mus' talk as if ever'thing were very pleasan'." The question rose again, but without bitterness now, how she could smile so brightly. "I have learn' some more. It is ver' difficul' to tell you, but it is difficul' to think, even—so strange that at firs' I laugh'." Yes, there were tears in her eyes. But she fought them back and smiled again. He felt his own eyes filling, and turned quickly to the window; but not so quickly that she failed to see. She was sensitively observant, despite her own trouble. For a moment, then, they were silent, lost in a deep common sympathy that was bread to his starving heart.

And then in another moment she was speaking, quite herself.

"My maid has foun' out that they are sending the head eunuch from the Forbidden City to our home. An' that is agains' the law."

"Of course," said he. "Even the Old Bhudda never tried but once to send out a eunuch on government business. That was the notorious An Te-hai. And he never returned; he was caught in Shantung—in a barge of state on the Grand Canal—and beheaded. Even the Old Bhudda couldn't do that. This woman is amazing. But of course there is really no government at Peking now—only this strange anachronism."

"He has orders to sieze all father's beautiful things—the paintings an' stones an' carvings."

"The rebels may catch him. They'd make short work of him."

"I ask' about that. The rebels have cross' the river from Wuchang to Han Yang, but they have not yet reach' the railway. That comes into Hankow from this side."

"Even so," he mused, "the train service from Peking must have broken down. Though they're running troop trains south, of course."

"I haven't tol' you all of it." Her voice was low and unsteady. "This eunuch, Chang Yuan-fu, is ordered by the Empress to take me to Peking too. They are all whispering about it. The Empress is angry at my foreign ways, and will marry me to a Manchu duke. She didn' like it when my father tol' her I mus' marry no man I didn't choose myself. I think you ough' to smile."

Mechanically he obeyed.

"It seems almos' funny," murmured Miss Hui. "Sometimes I canno' believe tha' such a thing could happen. When I think of America an' England and all the worl' we know to-day, I canno' believe that such wicked things can happen."

It was anything but unreal to Doane. He knew too well that America and England, even all the white peoples, make up but a fraction of the inhabitants of this strange earth. His eyes filled again as he considered the possible—yes, the probable—fate of the lovely girl at his side. In such a time of disorganization the reckless Manchu woman at Peking could do much. Chang might lose his head at the sound of gunfire in Han Yang and fly back to the capital, or he might not. A capable and corrupt eunuch would run heavy risks to gain such a prize. For a huge prize the viceroy's collection would indeed be; many of the priceless stones and paintings would never reach the throne.

The thought came of trying to persuade her to save herself; a thought that was as promptly discarded. She would not leave her father while he lived. He, of course, would not take his own life elsewhere than in his ancestral home. And to that home, with his inevitable escort of underlings and soldiers, was hurrying—if not already there—this Chang Yuan-fu, one of those powerfully venomous creatures that have figured darkly at intervals in the history of China.

With the shouting of many hoarse voices the dark mass up forward came charging down the corridor.

DOANE spoke low and quickly—

"Can you find out when Chang's train left Peking, Miss Hui?"

"No, I have try ver' har' to learn. I think they don' know that. It is so importan' to know that, too, because my father——"

Her voice faltered. Doane, with a swift glance to left and right, took her hand and, for a brief moment, gripped it firmly.

"You haven' yet spoken to my father?"

"Not yet, dear Miss Hui. You must smile! I have found it very difficult to think out a way of approaching him. Your father is a great viceroy. He might take it ill that I should venture to interfere in what he would feel to be the supreme sacred act of his life. He might"—Doane hesitated—"even for you he might feel that he couldn't turn back."

"I know," she said, very low. "I have thought of that, too. But they shall never take me to Peking."

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The Treaty *and* Its Critic

By André Tardieu

After Mr. John Maynard Keynes's article in the September number, summing up and bringing to date the sensational criticism of the Treaty of Versailles in his book "The Economic Consequences of the Peace," M. André Tardieu, the eminent French statesman, requested permission to supplement Mr. Keynes's discussion with a presentation of the French attitude toward the Treaty. In view of the fact that the Treaty occupies so apparently important a position in the November elections, this is obviously desirable and timely.

It is hardly necessary to say that, as former High Commissioner of France to the United States and French plenipotentiary at the Peace Conference, Mr. Tardieu is supremely qualified to speak, both for France and to America.

IF IT is true that Mr. John Maynard Keynes's book on the Peace Conference has attained a wide circulation in America, and has had a considerable influence on public opinion, I regret it for two reasons: First, because the psychological effect of the book is wrong; second, because its contents are fundamentally untrue. In this article, with the help of facts, I want to justify these two assertions.

Mr. Keynes is an economist of Cambridge University and during six months was attached, as financial expert, to the British delegation at the Peace Conference. He resigned this office only on June 7, 1919. Until then, he actively cooperated, as is witnessed by numerous notes that exist in the records, in the policy he has since then denounced as hypocritical, unjust and shameful, a policy that was already clearly defined at the beginning of April. He did not occupy a prominent seat at the Conference. Admitted several times to the meetings of the Big Four in the capacity of technical adviser, he has described these meetings with a bitter humor, as if he had been constantly present, thus taking advantage of a serious function he had undertaken to fulfill to gather the material of his satire against the men he was serving, a satire perhaps colorful and amusing, but also unjust and insulting. Inasmuch as Mr. Keynes from the very beginning regarded the Conference and its members in the light in which he has described them in his book, he would have acted with greater dignity had he given his resignation immediately instead of abusing their confidence through six months.

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André Tardieu.

Leniency to Germany

THE Peace Conference was the conclusion of the war, and the war was Germany's work. Read Mr. Keynes's book carefully; you will not find a word that either recalls or condemns the German crime. He constantly invokes justice and accuses the Allies and their associates of having been lacking in this respect. But not once does he put the peace in its true light, nor does he denounce the aggressor's responsibility. In his reasoning he places the criminals and the victims on the same footing. He refuses the latter the right to take precautions and guarantees against the former, and believing himself doubtless to be a realist, he systematically ignores what Bismarck called the "imponderable substance"—I mean, in this particular connection, the unprecedented sufferings inflicted on humanity by Germany's ambition. If matters stand as Mr. Keynes sees them, the United States, in their immense enthusiasm of 1917 for the cause of right and liberty, have been the dupes of a stupid illusion, because in his way of condemning the peace Mr. Keynes has condemned our three million dead.

Another objection, and no less important: When on any question whatsoever a discussion arises and the Allied and German arguments are in question, it is always the latter that Mr. Keynes prefers. Mr. Warburg, one of the German delegates to the technical conference held at Versailles and at the Château of Villette in the spring of 1919, rejoices himself, so it is said, at having greatly influenced Mr. Keynes's opinions. Mr. Warburg must be right in his assertion, and in order to make sure of this statement, I invite my readers to try this experiment: Take a sheet of paper and fold it in two columns. In the first column copy the notes sent by the Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau from May 10 to June 16, 1919, to the Allied and Associated Governments. In the second column, opposite these, write the corresponding chapters of Mr. Keynes's book. You will notice, as between the first and second column, a complete identity in principles, ideas, facts and figures. Mr. Keynes has written in English Count von Brockdorff-Rantzau's notes, but he has not invented anything new. If the public, in reading his book, believes him to have discovered a new view of the treaty, it is because the public has not thoroughly read the Brockdorff notes. If these notes are carefully examined, it will appear clearly that Mr. Keynes's book is but their faithful reproduction.

It is, moreover, a reproduction that is overemphasized, violent, and discourteous. Turn over the pages at random; they show a succession of injurious epithets that have not the value of good argument:

"Nightmare; empty and arid intrigue; puppet-show; Carthaginian peace; the hot and arid atmosphere of Paris; the treacherous halls of Paris; the morass of Paris; insincerity; systematic destruction; Germany's outlawry; spoliation; imperial aggrandizements; ridiculous and injurious provisions; the policy of reducing Germany to servitude for a generation, of degrading lives of millions of human beings, of depriving a whole nation of happiness; destructive blow at so-called international law; some preach in the name of justice; cavern sophistry and jesuitical exegesis; DISHONORABLE TO THE ALLIES in the light of their professions; dishonesty; the grossest spectacle; food for the cynic; imbecile and senseless greed; unveracity; crushing policy; policy of pretense; so contorted, so miserable negotiation; shame; false statement; breach of engagements and of international morality comparable with the invasion of Belgium; one of the most outrageous acts of a cruel victor in civilized history."

These are a few samples of Mr. Keynes's expressions. When people are right, they generally speak in a more moderate tone. Mr. Keynes is too angry not to be wrong.

Is it Unjust?

These preliminary remarks have, I believe, their importance because they indicate the general attitude of Mr. Keynes's book and they set up in all balanced minds a justified presumption against the assertions of the author.

Let us now consider the fundamental arguments upheld in the book, which can be summarized in one phrase: "The treaty of Versailles is unjust, contrary to the basis of peace, unworkable and without any conformity with Germany's capacity to pay."

It is to France, represented by M. Clémenceau, that Mr. Keynes ascribes in the first place the injustice of the peace terms,

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and its "punic" character. Let us consider the facts:

France has never challenged Germany and has been invaded by her twice in fifty years. In 1871, Alsace and Lorraine were wrenched away from us. In 1875, four years after the treaty of Frankfort, Bismarck wanted to attack us again because he found that we were not sufficiently "bled white," and that we were recovering too quickly. From 1875 to 1891, Germany multiplied the incidents and the menaces. France kept her self-command. From 1904 to 1911, Germany tried to raise a conflict either in Morocco or in the Balkans. France kept quiet and peaceful. By her military laws of 1911, 1912, 1913—corresponding to reduction of the term of compulsory military service in France—Germany proclaimed her will to make war. In 1914, she dashed into the war—the war she found so "refreshing and joyful"—refusing the negotiations and the arbitration offered by Russia, England and France. She violated the French frontier even before the German ambassador had left Paris. She invaded innocent and loyal Belgium, guilty only of remaining faithful to a treaty signed by Germany herself.

This war, conducted by Germany with a systematic cruelty, with the intention openly declared by the head of her military staff in the memorandum of February, 1918, of exterminating the French race and of annihilating French industry, has cost France one million four hundred thousand dead, and eight hundred thousand maimed men, three million wounded, two hundred billion francs, and increased our budget for 1914 to 1920 from four to twenty-one billions, our debt from thirty-five to two hundred and thirty billions; destroyed six hundred thousand houses, three million hectares of cultivated land, five thousand kilometers of railroads, thirty-nine thousand kilometers of road, eleven thousand five hundred factories that produced ninety-four per cent. of our linen thread, eighty-three per cent. of our cast iron, seventy per cent. of our sugar, sixty per cent. of our cottonades, forty-five per cent. of our electrical energy; mines that represented fifty-five per cent. of our coal and ninety per cent. of our ore. These figures, revealing the harm voluntarily done to France by Germany, you will search for in vain in Mr. Keynes's book; all his statistics are pro-German. This explains why he brings against France the injurious accusation of having falsified her damage accounts.

What France Gets

AND now, after that terrible ruin, what does the treaty give France that comes to her unjustly? Alsace and Lorraine? They have been waiting for us for forty-seven years, and Mr. Keynes, who ironically remarks that the language spoken in those countries is German (a statement, moreover, that is inaccurate because the Alsatian dialect is not German), forgets to recall that their heart, during the long trial, has always remained faithful to us. Those two provinces have been restored to us, and this restitution is the highest expression of justice of an international order ever registered by a treaty.

Sarre? Mr. Keynes denounces this chapter of the treaty as a monument of iniquity and hypocrisy, and obligingly reproduces on this subject a whole page of Count Brockdorff-Rantzau's memorandum. But he neglects to add that in that country, which for a long time was French and which was wrenched away by force from France in 1815, there are, particularly in the region of Sarre Louis, one hundred and fifty thousand French people, who want to come back into the French family. Well, what does the treaty do? It allows them—as well as the Germans—to choose in fifteen years by a plebiscite the sovereignty of their choice, and until then places them under the government of the League of Nations. Where lies the hypocrisy? Where lies the iniquity?

One-Sided Criticism

MR. KEYNES estimates that it was wrong to take away from Germany one hundred and fifty thousand railway cars, of which half shall be given to France. But he abstains from mentioning that in 1914 the Germans had stolen from us sixty thousand cars. Why does he desire that the difficulties he fears for Germany should be endured by France? Mr. Keynes is shocked that one should take away from Germany three million tons of shipping. He knows, however, that by the German submarine war the Allies have lost nine million tons. He deplores the situation of the vanquished with regard to shipping. But he refrains from declaring that France, for want of liners, has had, for two years, to restrict her shipments to and from certain of her colonies to bare necessities, and only once, instead of four times, a month.

Mr. Keynes writes that Count Brockdorff's counter-proposals concerning all these questions have not been studied seriously. But he neglects to add that they have been the subject of forty-seven meetings of the Big Four, and of three hundred meetings of the technical commissions. He asserts that the Allies were determined to destroy Germany's economic life, by laying hands on her foreign possessions, on her trade, her ships, her coal. But he omits to explain how, in leaving all this to Germany, we could have obtained the means of payment that nevertheless had to be found. He deems all these stipulations harsh and without precedent. What precedent does he know of that can be compared to the systematic destruction done by Germany in France, Belgium, Serbia, Roumania, Poland, Italy?

He is obsessed by the necessity of not exceeding Germany's capacity to pay. But he shows little anxiety to secure to the winners, victims of the German aggression, the capacity to exist. He fears that by taking gold out of the Bank of the Empire one may harm the German exchange. But not a word does he say of the French exchange that carried the dollar to seventeen francs and the pound to sixty-seven francs on April 15, 1920. Such a method of looking at the treaty can easily be judged in its true light, and excuses one from inquiring any further.

Mr. Keynes is no less severe with regard to the other stipulations of the treaty. But here, again, his severity is destitute of foundation. He protests against the seaport guaranteed to Poland at Danzig; against the plebiscite in upper Silesia; against the diminution of Austria; against the obstacle to her union with Germany. Here, once more, Mr. Keynes thinks as a German. He deems, with the Prince von Bülow, that there is no place in the world for the small nations, and he deplores the confusion spread by them in that economic organization of pre-war Europe, of which, so he declares with admiration, Germany was "the central support." If Poland is resuscitated, if Bohemia has arisen from her tomb, if the Slavs have gone back to Yougo-Slavonia, if Alsace and Lorraine have returned to their French hearth, it is because three million soldiers have died for the rights of small peoples. Does Mr. Keynes believe that they have been mistaken? One would assuredly think so, when we see him considering only the losses in coal and ore that will result from these events to Germany. This is a state of mind dominated by Marxist materialism. It is not the one that the Allies and the United States carried through the war. And this gives us Mr. Keynes's secret. Mr. Keynes has not understood the peace, because he has not understood the war.

Must we follow him in his juridical discussion of the conformity of the treaty of Versailles with the requirements of lasting peace? I should almost be tempted to dispense with it, so true is it that what precedes suffices to characterize his method; but I don't want to leave anything in the shade.

Imperialism?

MR. KEYNES asserts that the basis of permanent peace has been violated by a policy of "imperial aggrandizements." As a Frenchman I am proud to answer that the treaty does not place under the sovereignty of France a single human being who has not desired it for a long time, and I can not see where, in the rest of Europe, there are any imperial extensions.

Mr. Keynes denounces as a scandal the fact that the Allies should have claimed from Germany the payment of the pensions and separation allowances to the families of the mobilized men. These are not, according to his idea, damages sustained by the civilian population, and why? Because in every country these pensions and separation allowances are paid by the public treasury. If we follow this reasoning to the end, we might also say that the reconstruction of ruins should not have been at Germany's expense, because in every country there are laws about the reparation of damages, and this law has already cost the French treasury alone over twelve billion francs. Mr. Keynes admits, however, that the armistice signed by Germany, November 11, 1918, contains an article which says: "Reparations: any future claims and demands of the Allies and the United States remain unaffected," which consequently gives the Allies full judicial liberty. But as this clause condemns his pro-German pleading, he calls it a "casual protective phrase, to which no one has attached any importance."

Thus his method: everything in the peace documents favorable to the Germans must be interpreted literally. Everything unfavorable is without importance, and constitutes only "casual protective phrases." Further on, Mr. Keynes even declares that, in doubtful cases, Germany should be granted "the benefit of the doubt."

I could multiply such examples. Mr. Keynes writes that it is M. Clémenceau who imposed the "absurd and unjust" rule of not discussing orally with the Germans. Now, this proposition, which was

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Merely Married

By Nalbro Bartley

When you're over fifty, and have never done anything but just be married, and your kids want to put you neatly away on their shelves, what do you do? Sometimes, as Mary Bishop shows, you find a way to get out of just dying off. This is the first of a series of stories by Nalbro Bartley about very human things like that, in which old Doc Bellamy and his dog Dammit have a hand in certain real problems of ordinary folks. The next one soon.

THERE is something of the print of nails in women's lives, the cause sometimes being hopeless mediocrity from which there seems to be no end!

So thought Mary Bishop of Quimby the day following her pack-of-cards birthday, known to the bromidic as her fifty-second year. She recalled her four children's disapproval (they had spent the holiday with her) their denouncement of "old fashioned drudgery" although they did justice to the feast.

"Enough for a regiment;" her oldest son, Sam, had commented, "why wear yourself out cooking? Still, you can't teach old folks new tricks. Now my wife fries a steak or chops, opens a can of vegetables, patronizes a bakery—and there you are! She never tires herself out cooking."

"Did Doctor Bellamy prescribe for your dyspepsia?" his mother murmured.

"Um—the old boy is growing ancient—probably you don't notice it, living right in the town and——"

"Growing ancient, too," she finished generously.

Sam smiled. "Well, if you want to be the one to say it. Doctor Bellamy is as antique as his methods; preachy, too. Fine man; never knew any one who did more for others and less for himself—but times are changing and if folks can't measure up, they've got to drop out."

"Won't you young people give us a measuring stick?" she asked.

"I want you to see a heart specialist," ignoring her question.

At this point her two daughters and her other son returned from their bird's-eye view of the old home town, Hilda in the lead. Hilda was twenty-seven, going in for psycho-analysis in New York with the promise of success. She was given over to mannish attire and bobbed hair, betraying a polite intolerance toward every one and everything of the old régime.

Even her brothers and sister were suffering from "over-attachments" and "underbeliefs," "too high or too low thresholds of consciousness;" while her dear little old mother was quite hopeless! With nothing forcible or original about her, according to modern standards for women, there was nothing to be done for mother since she displayed extremely faint "libido" or life impulse. Mother's time to die gracefully in a steam-heated, modern cliff-dwelling was close at hand. It was Hilda's duty to pilot her to New York without delay.

"I admit, dearie," she began in abbreviated, modern style, "that Doctor Bellamy does fleck me on the raw—such a queer looking bird with that mouse-colored thatch of hair always in need of brushing and those bright savage eyes, and heeled by that impossible mongrel, Dammit!"

"What has Peter done now?"—her mother winced at the thought of this self-assured daughter opening fire on her oldest friend. True, she should be used to the happening, but being old-fashioned and having faint libido, there were certain things to which she never intended to become accustomed.

"Hilda spouted psycho-analysis, and he teased her about spanking her the time she had measles and wouldn't take her medicine," Cornelius answered.

"As if an old country doctor who couldn't pass as a city veterinary these days has the right to question such authorities as Freud and Adler," Hilda insisted, "I hope you never consult him again—but then, you'll be with me and I can see that you have the proper care."

Gently, Mary Bishop shooed her children into the parlors, and here they tried once more to convince her that she no more needed a personal home than a classical dancer does spats; that it was her immediate and bounden duty to dispose of the old home, "a mile out of town and right smack near the railroad," and come live with her children, turn and turn about, just "enjoy doing nothing, mother dear" for the rest of her days. It was not safe for her to live alone in a too large, inconvenient house jammed with trash of past generations. In the present housing congestion, when one could sell anything if the price was only *high* enough, was it not clear that she should at her advanced age of fifty-two (and smoldering spirit of twenty) sell off her worldly goods and let her children decide her future destiny?

So they had selected her fifty-second birthday as the opportune time to secure her promise.

SINCE a constant and clever reiteration of an untruth or a half-truth is often more effective than a single and somewhat uncertain declaration of the truth, Mary Bishop found herself half-way convinced. She, who was one of a vast majority of merely married mortals, with lives spent in homely duties and scant recognition, whose spark of genius had been unselfishly transmitted to her children—why should she expect some sky-rocket glory?

On one side were undisputable facts: times were changing; whether for better or worse was beside the question; they were changing and one could not remain stationary on this recently and universally installed escalator of progress. She was one of the "new poor" class whose purchasing value of a dollar was cut in two, whose hitherto modest income did not begin to suffice. Her children were united on the idea that she must renounce personal freedom and accept generous captivity. They presented the facts now forcibly, now sweetly, now almost bitterly. As they talked she recalled how Doctor Bellamy had shaken his mouse-colored thatched head at her and discoursed at length on high blood pressure and low stock of reserve energy and other annoying accessories to being fifty-two and always having done your own housework.

IF MORE was needed to win her children's cause—there was the damning humiliation of never having done or been considered anything unusual—why demand at this late day special consideration? Had she had a career, as Hilda threatened to succumb to having, or married well, as Jane had done, or made a fortune out of stocks, as was Cornelius's luck, or owned large fruit ranches like Sam owned—they could not have urged the matter. She would have been something else besides "just mother"—an individual crowned by definite achievement and savoring of this modern, individualistic age. They would have met on equal ground to discuss the matter. Instead, she had been merely married for thirty-four years, her own youth forgotten in making extravagant plans for her children. To outsiders she was a repressed, tense little soul, narrow and sincere in clinging to the old orthodoxy and all else it implied. In reality she gazed wistfully at the new and broader channels of expression, after the fashion of one doomed to bonnets who lingers before a milliner's spring opening.

There are countless merely married ones "who have not gone to school but who have met the scholars," just as there are countless modern children persuading these merely married martyrs of a past epoch to be content with an old-fashioned, silent corner in new-fashioned, clamorous homes.

All this on one side and the swirling world shut away from her. On the other, a sweetly scented dream, as appealing yet senseless as the last strains of a waltz—of coming into her own at this pack-of-cards age of hers, not sitting on the curb to watch the procession prance by. After her apprenticeship at serving others personally, to serve the remade world in some impersonal, glorious fashion.

"Come next month, mother," Jane took up the burden. Jane would be generous to her mother *if* her mother did what Jane wanted—and goodness knows there was

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nothing else for her mother to do! Mother had never done anything anyway—except marry at eighteen and raise her family. Jane would give her the sunny room and bath on the third floor, she would buy her spangly gray tulle things, and a fur coat for motoring, and in return Jane would like the mahogany in the back parlor. Refinished, it would put to shame that of her town neighbors.

"Now, mother," Cornelius was saying, "get that foolish notion of the wife's not wanting you out of your head. Because Betty had her hands full with the children and couldn't come with me is no sign she does not want you. There's an alcove room down-stairs and you can bring your own things so as to feel right at home. The children will keep you young, and we'll take you on driving trips this summer. Better come to us first—Betty said if you had no use for the china lamps—she would like them. She'll have them wired for electricity, and they'll be priceless—you know—these two and the ones up-stairs."

"I speak for the old pine furniture," Hilda interrupted, "it came before the mahogany period. And I'd like the quilted bedspreads and some pillows—I'm terribly weak on pillows. Mother and I pair off naturally—she can have all day alone to sew or read or nap in—just as she wishes. She's never had a chance to hear opera or see good plays, and I'll take her. Of course she is coming to me."

"Like fun she is. She's going to clear out of this Eastern climate and strike the palms and poppy fields," Sam finished emphatically. "My wife wanted me to bring her back. Oh, mother, don't let any one get hold of those steel engravings—I can have them reframed. And Alice wants the blue china set and the pewter and the mirrors, too, if you don't mind. Why, we'll put mother on the map if she comes to us—who knows or cares about her buried in Quimby in a house the right size for a foreigner's boarding establishment—who does?"

"The tax assessor——"

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"The minister——"

"A few other old dears——"

"Doctor Bellamy—" they answered in sort of a Greek chorus.

Here they rested their case with her. Mindful of generous birthday gifts and her dwindling bank account, she realized it was as useless to resist as to argue with a traffic cop.

Then they dispersed to see about railroad reservations and interview real estate men with final instructions as to selling the house. They would leave on the early morning local which connected with the main road some thirty miles ahead. They had said there was no need for mother's going in to the station; she could stand on her back porch to wave at them as the train whizzed by her house.

MARY Bishop took advantage of their temporary absence to walk through the old rooms. It was a mediocre house just as she was mediocre. Life's elemental happenings—birth, marriage, death had all occurred within its walls. The furniture was "polygot," some given by more prosperous relatives, some her bridal outfit, some acquired when a gleam of success had threatened her mediocre husband's path. After the children had taken their pickings there would be little left in which to interest second-hand dealers. Nor did she care. Little her children knew of her contemptuous endurance of the house and its contents. She had long since outlived its possibilities, as had her children, yet how could she demonstrate her new-age spirit while submerged in her old-fashioned background? She knew too well the ridicule even a hint of an attempt would invoke.

One of her bedrooms almost equaled Hilda's apartment in size. The room awaiting her in Jane's house was on the third floor. What was to be hers in her sons' homes she knew not—that would be decided upon by her daughters-in-law, good, kindly women—but her daughters-in-law, nevertheless.

She loved her grandchildren but she was not convinced that in this age of Bertilloning newborn infants, scientific schedules were the proper thing. Yet she must remain silent concerning her opinions on the matter. To live where no snow carpeted the front yard for old Father Christmas's advent would be an eternal monotony, and the alcove room furnished with her own things would be like transplanting a tree having neglected to bring along the roots.

She glanced at her clothes press. Most of its contents were hand-me-downs from those of stouter purse. Even the individuality which buying one's own clothes lends had been denied her. She had never dared rebel at it, the things were such excellent material—and she never went any place very unusual. Yet it was telling testimony to her own self-indictment of being merely married.

A black, square-muzzled beast poked his head in at the door.

"Howdy do, sir," Mrs. Bishop said cordially, "where's your master?"

Dammit led the way below. Age had seen fit to cast Dammit on square lines, he fairly bumped along, panting as he reached the bottom of the stairs, where he took a brief roll on a hooked rug.

"Sam says it's all settled—about selling the place—Dammit, get up—you're not worth cat, beans or sic 'em any more."

Doctor Bellamy seated himself in an old chair near the open door. June sunshine shone in uncompromisingly to emphasize the hundred odd "crinkles" playing pranks around his hazel eyes and lighting up the most faded spots of the mouse-colored thatch of hair. It showed the not square but rounded jaw betokening that the doctor could see the other fellow's opinion, too, although not relinquishing his own. It put to shame the shiny, patched suit he wore, the uncared for boots, and in contrast it seemed to caress the tender, wrinkled hands of a gentleman and a scholar which were busily occupied fastening a purloined Beauty of Blazenwood rose in his buttonhole.

Outside stood a top buggy—one of the last top buggies in Quimby, just as the doctor was one of the last doctors who paid calls by way of horse and cart. "Solid relic of the stone age; couldn't think of untracking myself," he used to say when the younger generation pointed out the merits of a roadster. Home Rule, the horse, was a salt-and-pepper affair; she was taking sundry bites at young green branches, glancing in at the doctor with a tyrannical eye as if to say the situation was beyond his control.

Bulging, worn medicine bags were in the buggy; a tattered linen robe and a whip as useless as a blade of wheat.

"Purposes are growing muddled these days, have you found it out? The youngsters suspected it? What is it they are trying to do—sell your house and put you in cold storage and tell the world they've done their duty? No, sir, I do not agree with them. Can't see you living with your children any more than putting a horse in a garage, and if that's too rough a simile——"

MARY Bishop dropped down on the last step of her stairs. "If I could only believe you were right—but I'm as remote from the new order of things as Mahomet's coffin. Neither you or I are young——"

"Oh, I don't know," the doctor crossed his boots defiantly, "I never felt as old or was as futile as when I was twenty. At thirty I had limbered up considerably—yes, from then on I showed signs of letting in a little brain on things. At fifty I kept stepping, didn't I? At sixty odd I'm on night call the same as forty years ago. At six this morning I was at the Dawsons's—diphtheria. At eight-forty, to be exact, I helped usher in a future President, and left him to escort poor Silas Crosbey out of his troubles. I made it a point to go in and see the Hilton boy and make him feel things will be all right no matter what he did if he never tries to do it again! Had a dinner of boiled pork and greens with the Seth Spooners—nobody ailing, but it's a good thing to drop in unofficially and see how the world wags. Big change in that family since I got Seth to see that anger was misdirected power and he'd been wasting a whole Niagara of it. Now I'd like to know how much Sam wants for yours and Thomas Bishop's house?"

"They are thinking of my best good," she defended, unconsciously.

"They always say that—and believe it, too. Don't get mad yet, it isn't time. I'll lift an eyebrow when you ought to begin mounting your dignity as a fond parent. But how do they know? How do you know?"

"It is being alone here, taken ill suddenly or——"

"Living with them and breaking a leg as you rise from a dinner party. Chance is always fifty-fifty, as the boys say."

"The high prices, this appalling reconstruction where old-fashioned people are helpless—its more than that," she added honestly, inspired by the steady, gaze of the keen eyes; "there's no denying that I'm as old at fifty-two as my girls will be at eighty-two. It's only the last few years women have dared to plan on remaining young. I am old because I've never been anything but merely married," she beat her thin hands together in disapproval. "I must go on merely living until I merely die."

"MERELY married," repeated the doctor, "that's a big charge the modern women can make against men. Satisfies Madam Grundy but that's about all. Sends the whole lot of you up Salt River as soon as romance has had its day. Merely married—busy, overworked fingers and idle brains—when the fingers are too tired to work any more and the brains would like a chance—nobody sees your side!"

"I've been the as-usual variety even if I've wanted to amount to something else. Now it's too late to try—my sort aren't expected to. The younger generation no longer knock at the door—they have skeleton keys to force an entrance whether or not we want them to come in!"

"Now—see—here," the doctor drew a long breath.

"Now — you — wait," she protested, "don't say I've been a good wife, mother and housekeeper and kept out of debt and in the church and all those terrible motto calendar things that drive home the fact of being just anybody. Don't you know what it is to want ecstasy—happiness does not take it's place? Every one ought to have a speck of it, a sudden, unreal, wild bit of achievement that tints the rest of life so it's drabness does not matter. The new woman is taking good care to provide for that, too. Why, I'd turn poet or pirate, assassin or aviator if I wasn't fifty-two and almost penniless. I'm so calm and reliable, they think, so uninteresting, so *sugary* good. I've done everything according to the old rules, even to bearing grief. Done it all as thoroughly as I houseclean, and therefore every one thinks it is time to let the young folks take up the problem of my food, clothes and a place to sleep—I suppose it won't be much longer to stay merely married. But that is what causes high blood pressure and a jumpy heart—science to the contrary—just keeping your soul at dead level and being merely married and fifty-two when you want to let your spirit soar and be twenty and delightfully discordant. Why, Peter, I could fairly shimmy to catch up to the new age."

She waited the avalanche of criticism. The doctor had three never-failing mannerisms, indicative of his mental state. Whenever he was about to tell a lie, he became slightly cross-eyed. Whenever he was angry he stood on his tip-toes. Whenever he was sympathetic to the point of fighting for the other fellow he would

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change his mother's thin, old-fashioned gold wedding-ring from the little finger of his left hand to that of his right.

Such an old country doctor as Peter Bellamy may be slow, a bit unsanitary, sometimes in error, but in a sense he is consecrated, for he has recorded not only bodily ills on card indexes but carries with him the sorrows of hearts and knowledge of soul wounds, which cause his antiquated squills and claptrap pills to cure. So many times it is the priest who is needed, not the man of science.

Slipping the old ring from the left-hand little finger to the right-hand little finger, he began slowly, "A person usually pays a pretty heavy price for being original and establishing a precedent. Now, I may not be able to qualify as a "pepologist" but if I were you, I'd sort of make up my mind to wear out instead of rust out—even if you do have to—shimmy."

"To-day's dollar is worth fifty cents, more often forty," she interrupted breathlessly.

"I know it. But to sidetrack for a little. In this changing age we need a good, fighting minority more than we ever did. Mark you, a minority is sometimes a controlling element; anyhow they're pretty good sort of folks to have around. Don't see what I'm driving at, do you? I'm sure that young woman of yours, Hilda, never would," smiling as he recalled Hilda's spirited discussion regarding introversion.

"I MEAN, to distinguish yourself by making the old age serve the new—when the younger generation come knocking at the door or brandishing skeleton keys—have it open! That's the best thing for people who have been born in one period and are doomed to live until the beginning of another. Life never will be all new period or all old régime—life isn't all anything. This reconstruction doesn't want a mob of followers because mobs always mismanage transition. It needs a discerning committee. This is the time of intelligent specialization; up to now we have been specializing whether or no, as a reaction from the old, maudlin generalizing. Now I'm not talking of myself—I'm of the old régime—in the back lines and I can't change. I'm just one of the fellows who can hold the other fellows' coats and hats while they go to it! It's good to have just a few of us around, too!

But out of this havoc and highbinding will come the slogan of the right person in his or her right place. Once you believe this, you can smile at headlines about soviets sweeping over the earth, women going bare-legged, men carrying feather muffs and other rumors concerning low orders of animal life. These children of yours have no more right to sentence you to a corner than Dammit has. You belong to a past epoch, but you have enough transitional fiber in you to combine the old with the new. Mark me, it will be some point of the merely-married you which will act as the guide to the new platform. As long as you fifty-two-year-old cameos do not protest but impersonally bless while the younger ones proclaim their new doctrines, well, I'd say we were off on the right foot."

He dashed down the stone walk to lead Home Rule forward to where no tempting green-leafed boughs existed.

Returning, he found Mary Bishop's face expressing hopeless calm.

"Do you want some blackberry jelly for your sick?" she asked, "I have so much left—I keep putting it up from habit, I suppose."

"Yes, I'd like the jelly after you've explained why you slam a mental door in my face."

"What's the use in baring an old-fashioned soul even to you?" she mused, "I'm well fitted to make jelly—but not grave decisions, as you would encourage me to do. I can't recreate myself unless my children help me, and they won't because they would think it wrong. After all, to become attuned with this modern age you must have money. I'm mediocre even in that—for I'm not dramatically poor, just poor enough to have to be helped. If I could, I'd tear down this atrocious house and build on this identical spot, because I love the trees and the garden, the most modern bungalow ever heard tell about—with every new housekeeping device and built-in attraction! As for myself, I'd have my hair permanently waved and my new—brand-new—dresses made above the ankle in length with smart, nigger-brown boots to call attention to the fact. I might resort to face-powder for high days and holy ones, and I know I'd have a pink corduroy bathrobe with slippers to match, and a talking-machine with dance records, and a wicker tea-cart. You don't know what lengths I'd go to—maybe a silver mesh bag—and—and an anklet watch. I'd buy an automobile if I could and go in for politics or writing insurance or anything that would get me out of the merely-married rut and give me contact with the new age. At least I couldn't do more than to fail and give the children the chance to say they knew it all along."

"Some people say St. Paul's vision on the road to Damascus was due to a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex;" drawing on disreputable driving gloves, the doctor contemplated ten protruding finger tips. "Some people believe adjustment comes solely from insurance companies. I don't."

"WHAT do you believe?" she asked almost impatiently.

"Don't know. I'm an old-fashioned, reverent faith believer. I think people better stick to their individual brands of faith—as long as they are sure it is faith and no imitation of it. Whenever I see some one who needs faith and wants it, I supply it. When they won't take it, I just substitute calomel. Because there are two kinds of folks in this world—those whose lives are ruled by their souls and those whose souls are ruled by their livers. I don't know the origin or the end of faith—and its a fine thing we can't stumble on the solution of blessed mysteries. But, my fathers, where would I have fetched up long ago if I hadn't just believed?"

"You'll be saying elves live in my garden next," she insisted. "While I get the jelly, go in to the parlor and select a keepsake—I suppose the place will go pretty fast once it is on the market."

Returning, she found him tucking a Rogers group under his arm.

"Not that atrocity," she objected.

"I gave it to you for a wedding present," he reminded with a courtly little bow, "anyway, I'm just borrowing it. I may return it—who knows? Put it back on the marble-topped, walnut table in company with the blue vases and the plush photograph albums. Even if you build the bungalow and take to limp-leather editions, you ought to have a few curios lying about."

"You would have me believe in fairies, wouldn't you?"

"I'm suggesting aggressive, reckless faith which is characteristic of this age. People used to pray for things and let the Lord take his time to getting around to fill the order. They've stopped nagging the deity now and are beginning to believe and rely on themselves. If you won't take my suggestion—you know my only other alternative. Front, Dammit! Good-by, Mary—thanks for the loan."

II

AFTER her children had left, Mary Bishop found that standing on her porch to watch the early local speed by was a fascinating habit. There was something, figurative about the engine's racing away from provincial territory; the train seemed a fragment of the new age, a sort of fragment she longed to be allowed to examine.

A week after the "For Sale" sign had been nailed on the front veranda, a piece of God's carelessness happened which brought to Mary Bishop's doorstep the fragment of the new age which she had longed to comprehend. All in a moment it was made her duty to take it in old-fashioned arms, figuratively speaking, to care for and help and examine it. And she found out that it was not so very far removed from past standards, after all. It brought back courage and a taste for life, increased libido, her daughter Hilda would have said, this realization that civilization would never be "entirely the same and never wholly different."

And the key to unlocking this truth was just jelly! Strange such a mediocre and hitherto despised thing should redecide her faded destiny. Yet it did—just jelly.

The first hint of the approaching new generation coming to be cared for was the sudden jerk and then swaying of the steam-engine so intent in leaving Quimby in the discard and making connections with a limited express. The engine toppled over, sinking on its right side; a hideous sight to watch that lowering of its black self with great belches of steam attending it and a roar of voices protesting the event.

Transfixed on her back porch, she saw the baggage-cars smash into splinters and the first of the day coaches give a lurch which brought it half-way into a ravine, half-way on the track.

Men and women poured out of the coaches; more cries and wails and loud expressions of dismay floated across the sunny clover-fields. Then she knew that having a house "right smack up against the railroad" sometimes had advantages, as did having extra blankets and dozens of filled jelly glasses, blackberry cordial, rolls of lint, smooth beds ready in a twinkling of an eye, and a long expanse of front and back parlors and sitting-room for those who needed none of these, but a place in which to regain a mental grip. After this flash-thought, came the telephone call to Doctor Bellamy and her hurried

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rush across the fields; the line of shaking, shaken-up, bewildered ones flocking into her house, some being carried up-stairs, some staying in agitated groups near the doorsteps.

Then followed twelve hours in which Mary Bishop was not merely married but merely heroic, in which she emptied her pantry shelves, her linen-press, her medicine-cabinet, forgetful of high blood pressure and low stock of reserve energy. Now she was directing the relief corps of girls and women, the boy scouts; now waiting on Peter Bellamy and the doctors from near-by towns; now giving an interview—and trembling as she dared to do so—as to her first impressions of the accident; then she remembered to give Dammit his dinner, and she knew h w not to stop being p sed because she had to slip a final sheet over a very still face, the very next hour being called upon to roll into warm flannel a brand new, six pounds young woman who decided to be in at the wreck whether or not!

AFTER the up-stairs had been emptied of its patients, she took count of the guests who lingered in her parlors and partook of her bounty—particularly jelly.

"Looks better than a certified check," was the universal comment.

"The sort my mother never used to make," said a slim, dark, Eastern-fairy-tale princess type of woman, wearing black velvet, with clandestine lines of sapphire satin everywhere they ought not be.

"Reminds us of the good old times when there were barely thirty rent days in a month," said a dapper man in a dazzling black-and-white check suit, the Eastern-fairy-tale princess's husband.

There were commercial travelers and a lawyer, a retired banker, a school-teacher, some merely-married women with children, and a girl who would be an ingénue to the day of her funeral—the Miss Jazz type with shaved eyebrows and a dead white face, her lips splashed with carmine. She hugged her squirrel dolman about her narrow shoulders coquettishly and displayed a small portion of a slinky, cerise silk frock.

"I wonder if my hat trunk was smashed," was her sole concern. "I knew I hadn't ought to have brought it into jay territory—honest, I had a toque of clipped vulture that was a perfect riot."

There was an antique dealer, who, once Mary Bishop's hospitality having absorbed the shock of the wreck, prowled about the house to examine its contents, and a long-haired highbrow, between bites of toast and jelly, who tried to get up arguments as to why Michael Angelo's bare figure with the unduly flexed joints instantly suggested the moral tragedy of life. The retired banker helped wash dishes and suggest names for the new young woman, and was presently seen joining a handful of others just outside the door, where they all became versed in the last word in hip-pocket etiquette. Some of the women were chattering about the high cost of low gowns, mink coats, ankle lengths, fifty dollars for lace stockings—wasn't it wonderful no one took cold and would the engineer get well and what a blessed thing this dear, gray-haired mite had been on the spot! Would they have been able to take it as philosophically, otherwise?

"You see, the old can still serve the new," he whispered.

Another group of women were enmeshed in a political discussion, with occasional digressions as to home dressmaking, are the comic supplements undermining the youth of America, should a woman tell her husband everything when she knows perfectly well he never does!

In the back parlor Miss Jazz was giving a demonstration of her two newest dances, Fisherman's Drag and Scissors; and an aviator was explaining to the underwear salesman all about air pockets; and the red-haired demonstrator for washing-machines was admitting that his boyhood had been passed in a neighborhood near the Bowery, where brass knuckles were trumps, and that his first real job was throwing fish to the sea-lions.

"Well, it's been better than an eye out," some one interrupted.

"A woman can be a woman these days without a crinoline——"

"Save half the time—just slice them, you know, and sprinkle——"

"Creeds are spiritual swaddling-clothes—the time has come——"

"Soviets a great force for the uplift, not generally compre——"

"Keep the worn tires turning if you like, but when my speedometer registers above seven thousand, I find——"

"Boy, you're on—he certainly took his punishment without a——"

"Chinese monks were here before Columbus—no doubt of it——"

"We used to have a trained-duck act but we were laid off so long we ate up the act," said the man in the checked suit, playfully tapping the fairy-tale princess wife on the shoulder; "that's our past."

With no flower in his buttonhole and gray-shadow weariness across his fine old face, Doctor Bellamy joined Mary Bishop in the doorway. He had come upon her, careful not to stop her forgivable eavesdropping.

"YOU see, the old can still serve the new," he whispered; "if you hadn't been about—how many more souls would we have lost? And all these might have had high-stepping hysterics wished on them for a year to come. Instantly welcomed and fed and comforted, they have responded by finding their sense of humor and thanksgiving and limiting their curses to lost baggage instead of God."

"Its been—great," she confided, "just what I've wanted—oh, not the suffering—but this—the really being in the thick of things—being necessary to some one else beside myself."

"You've had a pretty vigorous demonstration of how a merely married job permits of many openings that straight ahead, special work never does. You don't suppose these women in tulle-and-lace propaganda for all play and no work could have done what you did, do you? Fainting gracefully would have been their sum total. The wisest, rich man here could only have sworn and passed a hat around as his bit. Instead, you've been merely married for thirty-four years, and death and birth and a hungry, peevish mob were right in your line—just family life on a gigantic scale compressed into Lilliputian time."

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When the wrecked ones left on special trains, vigorous requests for more jelly reached her surprised ears. Any price for it, any amount. Did she want a deposit? One wanted his fiancée to be well supplied with the delectable sweet; the banker knew his digestion required just such a tonic; the traveling men would stop back for it and risk another wreck; the merely married women (with much transitional fiber) were relying on can-openers and delicatessen shops and would be only too happy to buy several pints. In orthodox advertising style the children were prepared to cry for it!

Suddenly the relief corps of village girls appeared to Mrs. Bishop in a new light—aide-de-camps in commercial jelly-making! So did the great berry patches on her land, and her own ability to stew and simmer and paraffin tops of glasses! The glow of having been something besides merely married for the past day, to say nothing of the moderns clamoring for a chance to pay her well for her old-fashioned jelly, supplied the necessary inspiration—but not the capital! There would be huge kettles needed, glasses, labels, advertising, a pay-roll of assistants—and sufficient capital to defy her waiting children-captors who would look upon this sudden plan of hers as certain proof that mother needed a controlling hand.

Yet so thrilled by the ecstasy of her one important instant, she promised them the jelly "without batting an eye" as Doctor Bellamy afterward reported, "as if she had just engaged a light brigade to help turn out the first batch."

III

A HANDFUL of guests persuaded her that to remain overnight would be to their heart's delight. These comprised the young man in checked attire and his fairy-princess wife, a tall, businesslike man, a fluffy-ruffle blonde the reporters called Haroldine Westmead and who made no denial that she appeared in six thousand feet of celluloid devilishness every now and then. There was a slightly dramatic-appearing young man who, as the boy scouts put it, "poured goose soup on his straw and parted it in the middle." The cub, too, was recognized as appearing in film comedies where kissing and other dare-devilish tactics played a prominent part.

"So you've taken a movie troop to spend the night," the doctor chuckled when he learned of it: he had come back to have a last word with the new young woman. "What more modern could have happened to you?"

"I'm past being thrilled," was her breathless answer. "I couldn't have more—what is it Hilda says I'm lacking in—'libido'—I couldn't have more 'libido' if I was in charge of Wall Street or a Balkan pirate."

"When does the jelly factory begin to jelly?" he teased, "you will get to be better known than certain brands of soap—have a standard ad of yourself standing in a honeysuckle-framed doorway, jelly in hand, you wearing peachblow muslin with tumbly ruffles—and that anklet watch."

While the doctor spent the better part of the night helping to finish the calamities the morning had begun, Mary Bishop put her movie guests to bed, her brain buzzing with extravagant plans, recurrently dimming by a distressing truth—she had no capital—not enough with which to defy and silence her children.

THE movie people had ham and eggs and Mary Bishop for breakfast. Still past being thrilled, she failed to register a blush when Haroldine Westmead, thanks to a heavenly restored trunk, made her entrance wearing a smoking suit, a quilted sky-blue jacket, white satin trousers fringed with gold and a red puff of a fez hat. Nor did she hesitate a single second in pouring the coffee because the Eastern fairy-tale princess slipped into place dressed in a gown of old glowing tapestry stuff, far more honored in the breach than the observance, with black lace slippers boasting of Wedgwood cameos for buckles. Little Miss Jazz, the stunt ingénue, made her arrival clad in a tuft of platinum threads all a-sparkle with diamonds and a few green sequins struggling valiantly to convince the world it was a morning negligée.

The tall, businesslike man, who was the director of these wayward children, offered his hostess the one thing needed to assure her entrance into the modern-bungalow-and-flivver arena.

"We could take scenes in this house," he explained. "Do you understand? If we can film a scene better with an original background than by constructing a phony one, we swoop down and do it. We had taken outdoor stuff in the Boston Valley where we boarded the local."

"Your parlors are the elegant eighties done to a turn," interrupted Haroldine Westmead, "we need such rooms for the prolog—they are quite perfect."

"Even to the family portraits with the massacre expressions," added Miss Jazz.

"And the potpourri table and the gilded shovel hung by blue ribbons!"

"Please leave the furniture until we clear to town and return with the others. To be tumbled out of a train, no bones broken, the girls' dry-goods intact, to find our scene set for us, to be fed and housed and given a chance at investing in a washtub of wine-giving jelly—well, strike me dead with an aigrette if I don't think wearing jade turned the trick. About price, Mrs. Bishop—and our board extra, if you like—it won't take too long I'm sure, and the shovel, plush what-not, body brussels and so on will be none the worse for wear."

"We need a Rogers group," some one reminded.

"I have one," Mrs. Bishop heard herself answering.

"As to price," the director continued, naming a sum—no, a fortune, that would give her the hope of the bungalow and the assurance of the end of the "elegant eighties" frame structure! It would be enough to defy her children—just as her children had had enough with which to defy her.

She must have said yes, because they all insisted on another round of coffee to cement the deal.

As myths grow larger when traced to their source where they are found in pristine glory, so Mary Bishop found her own possibilities and strength that the years of being merely married had given her. In this kaleidoscopic, now brilliant, now dross, age, she was in truth, a distinguishing note, for she was *real* as only thirty-four years of being merely married can make one real. And well fitted to cast her lot with the turbulent modernists, not sure from day to day whether they are to be flesh or fish or good red herring!

NOT attempting to set either her house or her thoughts in order, she flew to Doctor Bellamy's gray-shingled residence—his physician's sign so buried under ivy that no one even remembered its being there. The doctor was at home because Eccles, the continually rescued town villain and the doctor's man of all work, came to ward off her intruding self.

"'E is more than 'alf dead," Eccles explained patronizingly, "an I've 'eard some very neat tales about your own 'eroism, Mrs. Bishop. The doctor is completely bogged. I've stood guard for 'im all morning so 'e can sleep like a baby."

"Ah, then say I called." It had seemed only right that she share her future with the doctor first of all, for was he not to return the Rogers group?

"In the name of night, what's broken loose now?" demanded a hoarse voice. From an upper window there appeared a mouse-colored, thatched head and the collar of a scarlet gown.

Defeated, Eccles disappeared, leaving Mary Bishop to confide her great secret in breathless sentences, the doctor leaning farther and farther over the window casement to catch each detail.

"My, you'll be affording that heart specialist," was his first chuckling comment.

"You're sure I'm right to go ahead, aren't you?"

"As much right to refuse to go ahead as a coal miner has to wash, demanding something more original!" After which the window slammed.

Half an hour later, confronting Dammit draped under the breakfast-table, the doctor further confirmed his satisfaction by grumbling pleasantly, "Hi, come out from there—Dammit, do you know everything is turning out so fine, maybe Christmas will come ahead of time this year!"

JOHN GALSWORTHY

AN UNUSUAL story that for dramatic effectiveness, mastery of atmosphere and brilliancy of style represents Mr. Galsworthy at his best is "Timber," which will appear in EVERYBODY'S for December. "Timber" is a short tale covering only a few hours in the life of one man, an English landed proprietor of no particular distinction; but by the magic of his skill the author achieves a penetrating character study that is unforgetable.

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The Returning Prophet

By Du Vernet Rabell

A prophet (or a vaudeville actor), as you know, is not without honor but in his own country and among his own kin; same as the gag about a fellow being no hero to his valet. Old stuff. Your own folks always think they've got your number, true, but sometimes the loud guffaw is on them. If you don't believe it, notice the following.

BERT COLLINS bore not the slightest resemblance to a matinée idol. He was long-legged and lightly built, with retiring manners and a soft voice; his eyes were as round and blue as a little boy's marbles, and he had the gleaming white teeth of a grizzly cub. The passing fashions meant nothing in his life, and if ever he had his clothes pressed, they didn't look it. When the chorus girls made fun of him, his feelings were hurt, and when Letty de Laine, the particularly bright light of the "Zielenger Midnight Revue," cuddled his arm and sang the naughty chorus of her most popular song in his ear, he blushed in agony and stammered with discomfort.

Also he refused to call champagne "wine"—back in the halcyon days of beverage—and had never learned to say "Charmed, I'm sure," with just the proper amount of suave insolence when presented to one of the women who were always clamoring to know him. He just said, "Pleased-to-meet-you" all in one terror-shortened breath, seized the weather as a raft on a stormy ocean, and sailed for the open sea as quickly as he could.

And in spite of the above handicaps, he was a top-liner at the revue, drew a salary that made even Zielenger wince when he signed the check, and if he worked to earn it in the eighteen minutes he was on the stage, his effort was not visible. He merely wandered on, grinning sociably, greeted his audience, chewed gum, toyed with a lariat, whistled for Sylvia Sebrit—who did a sort of jumping-rope dance with him in the loop of the lasso—jerked his head at the storm of applause, grinned again, and vanished. Then he got his hat, shook himself into his overcoat, and five minutes later, in his snorting, roaring French roadster, was disputing the right of way with the Broadway trolley-cars at the Forty-second-Street crossing.

SYLVIA SEBRIT—Sylvia wasn't her name, but for one who has aspirations of one day becoming a Broadway star it is well to choose an appellation that will look well in large electric letters—admired Bert Collins, and cherished a deep and abiding liking for him that dated from the morning she had been called from her place at the end of the first row in the chorus—from this you can tell how good-looking she was without my going into flowery detail of her hair and eyes and figure—and ordered to try the lariat dance with Bert. She listened to his instructions, uttered a panic-stricken prayer, and stepped into the loop. When the music stopped and she realized that Bert had gotten her through without disaster and that the dance was hers, she could have fallen in a grateful little heap on the floor and wept for joy.

As for her liking—well, there were certain days when she came home in the subway jam and somebody had peeled the kid from the heels of her eighteen-dollar shoes, or when she had looked in the glass and found that her permanent hair-wave, for which she had sacrificed her luncheon for three months, was a delusion and a snare; when she had the blues generally. On these days she tearfully admitted that her liking was deeper than merely liking, and that she had a thrill, as if Bert's hand had closed about hers, every time she whispered his name. And she whispered it again and again because the thrill was so sweet. Oh, shades of the days when we were young and in love—and miserable!

AND Bert liked Sylvia. He liked her because she never missed her steps, because she never made eyes at him, and because she never told him that she could have a town car and a pekinese—sure mark of money and distinction in New York—by just lifting her pink-tipped finger. To be sure, he wished she wouldn't wear the outfit she did—short leather skirt, white silk shirt and high-heeled pumps, the like of which Bert had never seen on any range; but he supposed she didn't know any better.

To-night, when he came out of the theatre he stopped to chat with the Salvation Army lassie who stood in the entrance; then when he turned away, a man he knew buttonholed him to give him a tip on the stock-market, and after that a seedy-looking individual borrowed the price of a cup of coffee. So his progress was delayed, and Sylvia had changed into her street clothes and come out of the stagedoor just as Bert started his engine.

She looked at him wistfully. It was an awfully hot night. She would have loved a ride through the park and up the river—not that she would have expected Bert to ask her. Once he had taken her to luncheon, but that was because he found her standing, waiting for the rain to stop, in the doorway of the chop-house where he took most of his meals; and once he passed on to her a box of orchids some stage-struck young scatterbrain had sent him. But she had never even dreamed of riding in his car.

Bert, in turning around to see how far he could back his car, happened to see her. "Going up-town?" he called.

She nodded.

"Come along, jump in, and we'll take a spin and cool off."

They had turned off Fifth Avenue into the damp, shadowy coolness of the park before he contributed anything to the conversation.

"I'm not much on slinging the English," he told her then, "but you might chatter along; I like to listen."

Sylvia tore at her nerves. She must think of something interesting, brilliant, amusing to say. Something that would make him think what a pleasant, entertaining companion she was. But all she managed was, "Isn't it nice and cool here?" which was heartfelt but scarcely scintillating.

"It is, sure," Bert agreed. "I don't see what makes people crowd the Zielenger roof six nights a week, thinking they're keeping cool. By the way," he added, with his startling facility of dropping from one subject straight into the heart of another, "did you know I was taking a vacation?"

"Why, no—my goodness, what is the show going to do?"

"Oh, it can worry along without me. I'm only going to be gone for a couple of weeks."

"Where are you going?"

Bert glanced at her briefly, his eyes crinkling at the corners. "Atlantic City. I have a fancy to saunter along the boardwalk in white flannels and canary socks."

"Have you?" Sylvia asked uncertainly. She never knew when Bert was serious and when he was fooling, and this inability of hers to follow his moods filled Bert with unlimited joy.

"Yes," he went on, "and my tango steps need brushing up. I've only mastered nine—six more to get. I certainly do love to tango with my tea." He looked down at her, noted the expression on her face, and threw back his head. "Gee, Sylvia," he declared, when the echoes of his mirth had died away, "you are sure a bright ray of sunshine in my young life."

"I SUPPOSE you think I haven't any sense of humor," Sylvia said in an offended tone.

"Not a bit—but then cheer up; few women have. And when she has what she thinks is one, she is either too wise or too fresh. I'm going West," he finished. "You know I'm from the West—Livingston, Montana."

"Why, are you a real Westerner?" Sylvia questioned with wide-open eyes.

"Sure. Did you think I was a Sears-Roebuck cowboy?"

"What is a Sears-Roebuck cowboy?" Sylvia asked.

"Oh, he's a chap who buys an outfit, six-shooter, high-crowned Stetson, red silk handkerchief, Angora chaps and all, out of

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"Still," Sylvia argued, "you know what they say about the prophet in his own country. And when you come right down to it, most of the world, pals and all, was born in Missouri."

a Sears-Roebuck catalog, and then hangs around the hotel lobby in town, and gives the effete Easterners, looking for local color, a treat."

Sylvia laughed. Then she looked up at him curiously. "How on earth did you happen to drift to New York, and above all things how on earth did you happen to go on the stage?"

Bert swung into the line of motors that were winging their way up Riverside Drive like golden-eyed fireflies. He grinned down at her.

"Here goes for the sad story of my life. I drifted to New York because I'm a natural-born drifter, and I went on the stage because I happened to be thrown on."

"Thrown on?" Sylvia questioned.

"That's right, little girl, watch for your cues—it makes my points get over. Yes, I was thrown on. I got caught in a fire panic in a theatre out in Butte, and the first thing I knew I was hoisted up on the stage by the bunch stampeding behind me. 'For God's sake, say something to quiet these cattle!' the manager gibbered

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at me, and before I knew it, me and the folks in the audience were gabbing away as friendly as you please, and had forgotten all about the fire that didn't amount to a shuck anyhow. And then the manager offered me a job, being an impulsive soul with a weakness for taking chances, and as I had tried everything else but acting, I thought I might as well take a shot at that. Ever been out West?" he asked.

Sylvia shook her head. She was laughing. "But you don't act," she reminded him, "you know you don't."

Bert considered this. "I guess you're right," he agreed. "But why spoil a good story for a detail like that. As for the acting— Well, I just meander out here on the stage, and sort of sense what the audience would like to talk about that day, the Peace League, the election returns, prohibition, the stock-market, or the latest breach-of-promise case. And I tell them what I think about it, and they think it's funny. Not very flattering, but all in all, pretty remunerative."

"But your rope-throwing——"

"Oh, that's not for the audience, that's for me," Bert laughed. "You see, I never knew what to do with my hands, so I did that. I'm going home to be married," he finished.

SYLVIA gasped as if some one had thrown a bowl of icy water in her face. "Married?"

"Just that very thing. I don't know why I'm telling you all this, except that I always considered you a nice friendly little thing and there's always a time of the moon when a man talks—like a pup bays, you know."

"I'm very interested, I'm sure," Sylvia told him politely in a faint little voice.

"She's a girl whose dad owns the ranch where I used to work—the Triangle X. I worked there three or four years, and saw her grow from a maverick of sixteen, who stumbled over her own feet every time she moved, into the queen of the cattle country—how's that for a film title, 'The Queen of the Cattle Country'?"

"But—why, I never dreamed you liked girls! All the girls here——"

"Oh, these girls!" and Bert made a sweeping gesture of infinite scorn. Then his eyes narrowed as if intent on vistas far away. "My girl of the mesa is different. She wears plain clothes and does her hair in a smooth shiny coil on top of her head. She's not smart and clever like these girls, but she's read her little book of life by the fine clear light of the sun, not under a pink-shaded lamp with a manicured front-row Fauntleroy to help her over the hard parts. Fine little speech, what?" he declared in a pleased tone.

"And she's been waiting for you all this time?" Sylvia asked after a minute.

Bert hesitated. "Well, she's waiting," he said at length, "and I hope she's waiting for me. She's not married. I know that much. I haven't heard from her for some time, but then she's not much on letters, and I haven't written either. You see I knew I was going home—I wanted to surprise her."

"She must be very proud of your success," Sylvia sighed.

"Um," Bert chuckled. "She doesn't know about it. I'm keeping that as a surprise, too."

Sylvia laughed. Under twenty can always laugh when nothing else presents itself to do.

"And my three pals are out there, too," Bert went on. "They used to call us the Big Four—Al Deegan, Bud Thomas, Jim Magee and me. Those fellows are the greatest bunch God ever let loose to roam the range—maybe I won't fall on their necks and weep for joy!"

"I suppose you're going home in glory?"

"What do you mean, 'going home in glory'?"

"Oh, all dressed up and riding in this million-dollar roadster, and carrying your last week's salary on the trunk-rack."

"Not as you could notice it. Say, if I pulled any such stunt, the boys would think I was four-flushing—you know, trying to put it over on them. They mightn't—but I wouldn't risk it. Of course I want them to know I've made good, because they'll be glad, but not by putting on dog. No; I'm going out just as I left—because I feel the same as when I left."

"Do you think they'll know that you've made good?" Sylvia asked after a moment.

"Oh, sure. Broadway news gets out there."

"Still," Sylvia argued, "you know what they say about the prophet in his own country—they aren't so much thought of. And when you come right down to it, most of the world, pals and all, was born in Missouri."

THE one main street of Bozeman, Montana, was crowded, and the stream of cowboys, cowgirls, khaki-clad troopers from the remount station six miles away, giggling town girls in fluffy dresses, swarthy individuals selling flags and souvenirs, blanket-wrapped Indians from the reservation, curious tourists, and frock-coated officials who had to-morrow's round-up in charge, eddied up and down like a vast, sluggishly moving stream, whose tributaries overflowed into each of the short side streets. The one hotel was crowded, and a line of motors was parked along the curb, their dust-filmed bodies attesting to long journeys over prairie roads; before a doorway over which hung the sign, "Rooms," was a crowd of people, people who had perhaps come from miles away—North Dakota, Wyoming—to the roundup, and now found nowhere to sleep.

From one such group three men detached themselves and wandered off down the street. Coming to a section less congested for the moment, they sank down on the curbstone, and all three reached for cigarets.

"I told you, Al," complained a long, lank individual with a handkerchief of silky green tied under his chin, "I told you just how it would be. I said you ought to write in for a room. And did you? You did not. Nobody ever listens to me."

"Yes, we do, Bud," one of his companions consoled him; "but you say so much we kind of lose track sometimes."

"Oh, all right, be facetious, but that won't get us a bed. And don't expect me to laugh. Ride forty-five miles and no place to sleep! When I come to the city," he added plaintively, "I like all the luxuries—a telephone in my room, a private bath, the newspapers under my door every morning, and all. And do I get them? I do not!"

The man called Jim turned away and cast exasperated eyes on the third man, who was slouched down into a position of great comfort and was softly singing "The Rosary," with painstaking regard for all the minor harmonies. Presently he finished, and looked up.

"That's a great song. Like it?" he asked Jim.

Jim Magee blew a lungful of cigaret smoke into a cloud of mosquitoes. "Not so you could notice it," he answered.

"Al is no singer, but he sure has a passion for uplifting what voice he has in song," Bud commented bitterly. "And is he ever discouraged by the criticism of his friends, a criticism which has only his own future safety in view——"

"He is not—there, I said it first," Al cut in. Then he added, "Say, Bud, let's see that postal-card from Bert Collins again."

BUD fished around in various pockets and presently produced the desired postal. All three heads bent over it and perused it for about the twentieth time, with interest.

"So old Bert is coming back. Wonder if he'll ask old man Simonds for his old job?" Bud absently asked himself to a handful of Jim's tobacco.

"Sure he will—and he'll get it," Jim answered. "And we'll all ride the range together again, and the Unholy Trinity will be changed back to the Big Four."

"Won't it be great?" Then Al added. "Poor Bert, went out to seek his fortune in the big world, and here he is back at the old stand."

"Bert can sit a cow-pony, he knows enough to keep his rope dry, he can brand a calf and throw a steer, but he just naturally hasn't got the hang of making money."

"I don't know now," Bud said; "do you remember that tale Shorty Linn told about Bert going on the stage and making a bunch of money?"

Jim snorted derisively. "Shorty Linn! Say, if Shorty hears a rumor that a man has landed a seventy-dollar-a-month job, by the time the rumor gets to you, he's backed young Rockerfeller off the map, and is fighting Pierpont Morgan for the art treasures of Europe."

"And what's Bert *got* to go on the stage with?" Al added.

Jim shook his head. "Even though Bert was always the kicking pest out at the range for anybody with a grouch, he'll never lack friends; but what he will lack until the day his number's called is ready cash." He looked down at the postal. "Well, he says here he's on his way, and it's dated August the second, and that was the day before yesterday. He ought to be here to-morrow at the latest, even if he's traveling slow freight."

Al rose and stretched his arms above his head. "Well, come on. We can't gain anything by sitting here. It's a blanket and a bed on the prairie for us, I guess."

Bud began to growl again. "Yes, and if you'd listened to me— Say, where do you think you're headin' in at?" he broke off to yell, as a small, battered-looking car, one mud-guard gone and the radiator boiling up a cloud of steam, skidded over to the curb.

Suddenly there was a great shout and the Unholy Trinity fell upon the occupant of the dilapidated car. "Bert, you old son of a gun, it's a pity you wouldn't run

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over an old pal! Where did you blow in from, old prairie-pup?"

Bert Collins, a cap that once had been plaid, but which retained little of its pristine glory, on his head, a pair of dingy khaki trousers bagging on his long legs, and a linen duster flapping open over a faded striped shirt, tried to hug all three of his friends at once.

"Came through from Gardner to-day," he said, "for fear I'd miss some of to-morrow's fun. Say, how do you like my Rolls-Royce?"

The boys circled about the car, which was of the species known as a tin Lizzie, and commented on it with hilarious, if unflattering, frankness.

"Never you mind; she sure can fan the breeze," Bert returned. "Well, come on. Where do we eat?"

"If you can squeeze yourself into a restaurant in this town, you're lucky," Al told him, "and supper's been over at the hotel two hours since."

"We haven't a place to lay our heads," Bud put in, "and I told Al Deegan over a month ago to write—but you know 'em. They never pay any attention to me."

"We're bunking on the prairie, Bert," Jim said, "and if that's high-toned enough for you, after living in the East and putting up at the Waldorf-Astoria, I'll lend you a blanket."

"It suits me fine," Bert replied, and added with a rush of enthusiasm, "and let's get some grub and cook it over a fire—and Bud here can make some of his famous flapjacks."

"Oh sure, elect me cook. Do I ever fall in soft? I do not." And Bud, still grumbling, but his arm affectionately thrown about Bert's shoulder, followed the other two.

Al called back over his shoulder: "Bud picked up that 'I do not' business from a vaudeville team he heard on a phonograph. It's the poor boob's idea of something funny, and we humor him, but you don't have to laugh—there are limits even to friendship."

AN HOUR or so later, the remains of their supper cleared away and their pipes going, the men gathered about the fire.

"Come on now, Bert," Jim suggested, "here's the old bunch gathered together about the fire, like we used to. Two years is a long time, especially when a chap's got writer's cramp like you and confines his correspondence to picture postal-cards, saying, 'This is a great town' or 'I'm well; how's yourself?' Come across now, tell us about it!"

"Oh, I'm getting along fine," Bert was beginning, when Bud interrupted hilariously.

"You needn't be modest in your tale. We've heard all about how you've gone on the stage and set the great metropolis afire with your youth and beauty."

"Sure, and that you're drawing the salary of a railroad president," Al interrupted, quick to catch the spirit of the thing.

Bert looked from one face to another. There was nothing of unkindness written there, no desire to gloat over the rumored hard luck of a pal; all that he saw was just an honest spirit of mischief, such as might be found on the faces of a bunch of undergraduates gathered to kid a schoolmate on a tale too wild to be true. Slowly Bert smiled his wide, infectious grin.

"Oh, sure," he drawled, puffing hard on his pipe, and staring into the glowing embers of the fire, his blue eyes crinkling at the corners. "That ain't nothing! I've joined up with a troupe owned by a man named Zielenger—Abe Zielenger. Perhaps you've heard of him—he's worth quite a piece of money, and owns half the shows in New York. And speaking of New York—say, you ought to see the Big Ranch——"

"Nothing doing—on with your tale. Back to the job you've got. Do you do a song and dance, Bert, or just a bit of refined comedy?"

"Neither would be in Bert's line," Al said gravely. "I'll bet he recites, 'Curfew Shall Not Ring To-night' or 'Good-by, Sweet Day'—something with a heart-throb in it. How about it, Bert?"

"Sure I recite. But not any set pieces, you understand. Just what comes into my head."

"And they stand that—at a theatre?" Jim demanded incredulously, taking his tobacco-pouch out of Bud's marauding hands. "Say, what kind of a joint is this?"

"Well, it's not a regular theatre," Bert explained. "It's on a roof—twenty stories up in the air. And the stage isn't at one end, like in the theatres you've seen out here; it's down in the middle of a ring, with seats all around, and they're not regular seats, either; they're chairs around little tables where the audience eat and drink——"

"Don't sound respectable to me," Jim commented virtuously, but he was silenced by the other two.

"And the company get on the stage over a bridge, a glass bridge, and the chorus girls dance on it over the heads of the audience."

Jim uttered a shocked exclamation. "This lamb has strayed far from the fold!"

Bud was shaking his head sadly. "How much I've missed in life! The guy that said that travel broadens a man sure knew his little book."

"Get to the money part—what do you do to earn your munificent salary? This story's getting good," Al declared.

"Oh, yes. Well, along about ten-thirty I wander on——"

"What do you wear—pink tights?" the insatiable Jim demanded.

"Oh, g'wan, I go on just as I am; I mean in regular clothes. And I talk a little to the audience, and we exchange views on the news of the day, and I show 'em a few stunts with my rope, and then I say good night and beat it."

"AND may I ask what you pull down for that?" Jim inquired with elaborate politeness, while Al broke in eagerly: "Say, Bert, isn't there room in that troupe for a real tenor?"

"Yes, and if you came on, there'd still be room—mainly out front," Bert told him, affectionately tumbling him over backwards. Then he answered Jim: "Well, I'm drawing a thousand dollars a week now, but when the new show opens I'm going to kick for more, and some little bird tells me that I'm going to get it. A man's got to live! Say, is Old Man Simonds in town?"

"Bert," Jim declared slowly, awe in his tones, "you're wasted with that troupe. With your imagination you ought to be writing these thrillers for the magazines—you know, these tales with plenty of action; they open in the South Seas and finish on a glacier in Alaska, and there's a murder or a marriage in every chapter. Sure Old Man Simonds 's in town. So is Marion."

Bert rose and stretched himself. "Then you fellows will have to excuse me. I'm going to turn in. I've come some miles to see that young lady, and I aim to call on her before the rush begins."

The next morning the Unholy Trinity accompanied Bert as far as the hotel where Marion Simonds and her father were staying.

"Don't stay long," Bud begged; "there's still more we want to hear about that thousand-dollar job of yours."

"And the glass bridge of sighs."

"And your suite at the Waldorf—and your valet."

"Sure," Bert agreed, turning on the step to grin down at them. Then he added impressively, "Fellows, you don't know half!"

BERT was shown into the parlor of the hotel, and after a twenty-minute wait Marion Simonds swept into the room—a magnificent, breath-taking Marion. She was dressed in a striped skirt of fashionable scantness, with an orange-silk sweater, and her hair was slicked close to her head on top, puffed out over the ears, and built into an elaborate structure at the back of her head. She stopped for a moment on the threshold and then advanced into the room, her hand outstretched, a friendly smile on her face. But Bert couldn't help but feel that although her hand-clasp was fresh and cool, it was about as emotional as the porcelain handle of a door.

"Dad's out," she said.

"I didn't come to see Dad," Bert told her. "I came to see you—almost two thousand miles. How about sitting down?"

"Why, yes, do sit down." Marion seated herself on the edge of a red-plush chair. "I'm pretty busy this morning—the round-up this afternoon——" She patted her hair, and her voice trailed off.

"Are you going to ride?" Bert asked with interest.

She frowned and flushed. "Of course not. We've got a box—Dad's one of the judges."

"Well, you needn't get mad about it," Bert said. "I was trying to pay you a compliment. You sure could handle a pony in the old days."

"I hardly ever ride now," Marion drawled, looking in a bored fashion out of the window. "We have a motor."

"That so? I suppose you run it all over the place?"

Marion's brows went up. "Dear me, no. It makes me nervous. We have a chauffeur."

"A chauffeur!" Bert appeared greatly impressed. Then he asked. "One of the boys? I sure would like to see Bud Thomas or Jim Magee breaking in an automobile."

"We have a French chauffeur," Marion told him. "Dad wouldn't trust any one else with the car. It's an imported machine."

"Oh!"

There was a silence of a few minutes between them, and then Marion, apparently resigning herself to the rôle thrust upon her of hostess, began to converse. She chatted of this and that, the changes on the range and her trip to the Orient; the art treasures her father had bought, and the

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Her airy persiflage, her world-weary comment on things and people, had completely demolished Bert's castle of dreams.

difficulty of getting any clothes fit to wear nearer than San Francisco, and these. she observed plaintively, were only clumsily copied imitations from the Eastern models.

"The West is sure a crude, rough place—none of the refinements of life," Bert agreed.

Marion was seemingly surprised, also faintly annoyed, that he had noticed this.

"Yes—but what can we do? It's our home—for the present."

Of course Marion Simonds didn't realize it, and probably wouldn't have cared at all if she had, but the conversation had entirely changed the aspect of the world for Bert Collins. Her airy persiflage, her world-weary comment on things and people, had completely demolished Bert's castle of dreams and left nothing but a heap of stones scattered over the prairie. But, strangely enough, the destruction of this visionary structure didn't leave Bert as heart-broken as might have been expected. For, truth to tell—although Bert himself didn't realize it at the time—his

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heart had ceased long since to dwell in these marble halls. Only his imagination now wandered about in the terraced gardens, a tenant, as it were, of this castle of dreams, and even its lease was expiring. But Bert valued his dreams, as men of his kind so often do, and made a desperate effort to gather up the fragments falling about him.

He came and sat down beside Marion, taking her hand in his. "Marion," he said, "we don't seem to be getting anywhere."

"I don't know what you mean," Marion answered, in the tone of one who issues a veiled warning to a presumptuous child.

"Oh, I'm willing to explain," Bert returned. "As I said, I've come a long way to see you, Marion, and from the day I left, half a dozen times every day I have looked in my mind at the picture of you as I last saw you—like going to an art-gallery to look at a picture you never could see often enough. The rippling waves of the prairie-grass rolling off to the lilac-blue horizon, the red cañon with the tufts of gray-green sage clinging to the sides, a girl sitting on her pony at the cross-roads, the wind blowing her hair, both her and her pony outlined against the gold and crimson of the west like a picture by this chap Remington."

MARION withdrew her hand from his clasp and leaned back in her chair. "Now, Bert," she said, "we might as well get this over right now—I don't believe in putting off unpleasant things. I'll admit there was a time when I liked you, or thought I liked you pretty well, and I was silly about your going away. But you know I stopped writing to you, and—well, two years is a pretty long time."

"Is it?" Bert asked gently, when she paused.

"Yes, it is. And I've changed. I've been away to school, to Helena. I've met new people, educated, successful people, girls who have been to Europe, whose brothers have been East to college. Everything about me is changed."

"Even your clothes and hair," Bert put in when she paused.

She nodded briskly. "Yes, I'm adaptable; it didn't take me long to learn. And I've learned about the world, too, and what a girl needs to make her happy. I'm ambitious—I get that from Dad—and never could think anything of a drifter like you, Bert, who is a failure in life and doesn't care if he is. My dad came to Montana twenty-five years ago with ten dollars in his pocket, and to-day twelve thousand head of cattle with the Triangle X brand wander over these prairies."

"Then you're aiming to marry a man who has as much money as your dad?"

"Well, that's a pretty broad statement. But I certainly aim to marry a man who is headed that way. And you're not, Bert." She rose with an air of finality. "I like you, Bert, I do really, and if you want your old job back I'll see that Dad gives it to you. But mind"—and there was the chill of the first fall wind sweeping over the mountains in her smile—"remember, no nonsense."

They parted at the door of the red-plush parlor. "And thank you about the job," Bert said, "but I don't think I'll take it."

"Seventy-five dollars is a lot of money," Marion told him.

"It sure is," Bert agreed. Then he added slowly, his blue eyes dancing, "I might even save myself a little stake out of it, and give your dad a run for his money."

On the steps of the hotel Bert removed his hat and mopped his forehead.

"That last statement was a risk, my son," he said. "She might have taken you seriously—girls have no sense of humor. And," he added sternly, "let this be a lesson to you. You want to quit going around offering yourself so free. One of these days some poor simple little soul might love you for yourself alone. You never can tell."

BERT stayed in the cattle country a week. His visit was a huge success, and the boys told him he still spent money like a drunken sailor with no thought of the future, when out for a high time. He borrowed a pony and rode the range with his friends, and of an evening they indulged in a quiet little session of poker with the deck stripped and the joker wild.

Bert was a lover of the national game, but owing to his unlimited and entirely unjustifiable faith in aces up, it had always proved an expensive pastime. And then, when all the other pleasures palled, the boys would clamor for more of Bert's confidences regarding his life in New York. They never tired of hearing about the show of Zielenger's roof, his thousand-dollar job, and the automobiles, which according to Bert were often six deep on Fifth Avenue.

"You can tell a story better than any man I know," Jim assured him solemnly, on the day he left. "I'm not a good liar myself, but I know good lying when I hear it."

"And remember, we'll be watching for you next year," Bud said, and added jovially as the train pulled out, "and if you're broke, send word, and we'll pass the hat."

On the way home Bert began to think of Sylvia. He didn't know just when he started to think of her, nor the cause, but once started he couldn't stop. He thought of her when he looked out of the car windows at the prairies rolling away on every side in lonely but serene grandeur; when he saw the orange-and-gold glory of a particularly gorgeous sunset. He thought of her when he held a sun-ripe Yakima peach against his cheek, and when a girl went through the car with a bunch of pink asters, smiling at him over her shoulder.

The night he landed in Chicago he went to a café and a girl that looked like Sylvia sang a Spanish waltz song full of mellow sunshine and love and laughter. And that night his thoughts seriously interfered with his night's rest. He had a picture of the girls he had seen at the round-up, handling the vicious little cow-ponies, their top-boots, khaki trousers, and the heavy sombreros pulled down over their foreheads. Then he thought of Sylvia in the costume he had so often ridiculed—the short leather skirt cut away from the rounded silken knees, the high-heeled dainty slippers that twinkled like gay little stars when she danced, the silk shirt open over the slim white throat. She had spoken about asking for a change of costumes; she hated to have him making fun of her all the time. He wondered if she had.

He found himself getting quite worked up over this. He didn't want her costume changed; he liked it just as it was. He didn't want anything changed, anything at all.

The first night he appeared on the Zielenger roof he was given an ovation. Zielenger thought it would be a good idea to arrange for a supper on the stage after the show, and to invite some of the newspaper boys. But Bert vetoed this.

"Sorry—got a date," he said.

Then he sought out Sylvia Sebrit. "You've got to go to supper with me," he told her, "just to back up the lie I told Zielenger."

"Well, am I to congratulate you?" Sylvia asked, as they sat over their cold boiled lobster in the corner of Keen's Chop House.

Bert grinned at her. "No; she turned me down," he said. "I didn't have enough money."

"Oh, I'm—I'm sorry," Sylvia said softly.

"You needn't waste any sympathy on me," Bert rejoined blithely. He didn't say anything for a minute; just sat there looking at her quietly. Then he drew a long breath and blinked three or four times like a man suddenly awakening from a long, deep sleep.

"Say, Sylvia, let's you and me get married."

Sylvia cast a startled glance at him. Then she crumbled her roll and bit her lips; finally she reached in her bag for a handkerchief, and dabbed her eyes.

"I know you like to fool," she said, her voice quivering, "but I don't think it's—it's nice— You oughtn't to fool about things—like that."

Bert reached across the table and gave her a quick little shake. "Quit that!" he ordered. "I guess I know when to fool and when to get down to cases. I'm crazy about you—I don't know when I began to be, but I know I am now. I'll bet it's been coming on me for a long time too, right from the first time I saw you. Yes, I know I chased out West after a girl, but it turned out not to be a girl at all. It was a picture I was in love with, not a girl—a picture of a girl sitting on a bronco with the sun going down behind her. And the only reason something didn't fall on me after I got there was that the Lord looks out for such as me—it says so in the Bible."

After a moment Sylvia ventured softly: "You know, Bert—well, I hope you don't think I'm marrying you for your money; because you're a top-liner on the roof."

"Sure I do. I think you're a cute little coyote with an eye on my bank-roll."

Sylvia looked distressed. As usual, she didn't know whether or not Bert was in earnest. "Of course I can't prove you're wrong," she began nervously. "I can only tell you——".

"Well, don't tell me here," Bert interrupted. "I can't pick up my cues with the proper gestures. Come on out to the taxi."

PICTURE to yourself a ranch on the snow-covered prairies of Montana in the grip of the first big storm of the winter. A bunk-house was huddled in the lee of a grove of gaunt, wind-tortured cottonwoods, and the gale was howling like a banshee as it whips around the eaves. The door banged open and Bud Thomas, the mail-bag over his shoulder, tumbled in,

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"'Bert Collins,'" he read, "'who has recently signed a contract making him the highest-priced performer on the American stage.'"

stamping the snow from his boots and beating his dripping hat against the wall.

"Gee! Some night!" he exclaimed with chattering teeth.

Jim Magee pushed a fresh log into the stove, and threw a magazine he was just about to open at Al Deegan, who was essaying "Sweet Summer Breeze" on a newly purchased ukulele, helping out the instrument's lamentations with a few wailings of his own.

"Do you remember how Bert Collins hated the winter?" Jim asked, delving into a bag under his bunk and producing his tobacco.

Bud helped himself and thoughtfully rolled a cigaret. "Yes, well—here's hoping that he's out of this storm and in a soft berth."

"Well, if he isn't," Al looked up from the magazine to say, "he'll probably bob up serenely one of these days and say he was—you know Bert. Like the time he went to Rosebud to buy those Angora chaps he'd talked about all winter, and got caught in a game of stud and cleaned out."

"Yes," Bud chimed in, "and when we asked him how he came out, he said, 'Oh, on my feet.'"

"And him out eight dollars and a horse," Jim added.

"It was the same last summer," Bud continued. "Remember that crazy yarn he told about his soft job and how we guyed him about it and his thousand-dollar salary? We oughtn't to have done it," he finished contritely.

Jim was shaking his head. "I've often wished myself that we hadn't. Poor Bert, he certainly put up a stiff front."

A sudden shout of derisive laughter from Al Deegan interrupted him. "*Stiff* front!" he howled. "Sure he put up a stiff front—he could well afford to. Oh, we are sure a bunch of poor simps!" And he rolled back on his bunk, waving the magazine in the air.

In a moment his paroxysms ceased, and he sat up, wiping his eyes on his cuff. He held the magazine to the light, warding off the efforts of the other two men to take it from him.

"'Bert Collins,'" he read, "'who has recently signed a contract making him the highest-priced performer on the American stage.'"

THERE was a long silence while the three men looked at one another, sheepish grins beginning to appear on their faces.

Bud and Jim leaned over Al's shoulder to study the full-page illustration of a man in a loose-fitting, rather shabby suit, a lariat held awkwardly in his hand.

"Same old Bert," Jim observed.

"Same old grin," Bud ended.

Al reached for his ukulele. "And same old Bert—the dead-game sport!"

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Photo by Central News Photo Service.

At the Queen Alexandra Rose Festival, where Mary sought protection atop of Douglas's shoulders.

The Strenuous Honeymoon

By Alexander Woollcott

AS THE summer waned and the leaves began to fall in Kensington Gardens, England gradually recovered its wonted calm after one of the greatest emotional storms of its history, a hubbub that filled the newspapers, packed the astonished streets of London until traffic was given up as a bad job, and provided the one and only topic of conversation to be overheard in any English family, from that of the meanest mechanic in a north country factory to the one which is usually at home in Buckingham Palace at this time of year.

The excitement was not about Ireland or yacht races or war or the cost of living. It was merely caused by the fact that two American movie stars had decided to pass through England in a hurried tour of Europe. To be more precise, an American motion-picture actor named Douglas Fairbanks and his bride (she had been a Miss Pickford) spent something short of three days in London, and the town gave itself over for those three days to such an orgy of curiosity and hero-worship as the old city had never seen before, from the days of Nell Gwynn to those of Adelina Patti. Long outraged leaders were written summoning the British people back to their ancient ideals of stolidity and composure and expressions of pained surprise became fixed in the membership of the Garrick Club, where, according to a quite credible rumor, all the fine portraits of old English actors automatically turned their faces to the wall.

The somewhat startled causes of these manifestations of England's interest and good will had worked a quiet spring wedding into the program of their rather crowded days, had come East on business and, at the eleventh hour, had decided to blow themselves to a six-weeks absence from the new gold-fields of California. It proved to be the most exhausting and conspicuous honeymoon in the history of the marriage institution.

By the time they were in mid-ocean, the cabled news of their departure from New York had begun to ferment in the British bosom and signs of agitation there to manifest themselves in the form of forty or fifty relayed radiograms a day, imploring the young visitors to open such-and-such a fair or be god-parents to such-and-such a newly-arrived Briton. The airplane companies, scenting publicity and the focus of the public eye, rushed machines to the bay so that the Fairbanks-Pickford mail could be delivered in a becomingly spectacular fashion. Thus it befell that with roses dropping from the skies, with motors whirring overhead, and with crowds whooping it up from the shore, the two movie stars landed in England. It was the kind of arrival usually reserved to royalty, but compared with its vehemence, the advent of the King of Spain a fortnight later was as uneventful as the landing of a Lithuanian peasant at Ellis Island.

The King and Queen of Weary Hearts

THE motion-picture exhibitors of the United Kingdom had assembled hastily to repair to Southampton, doubtless with the idea of working up a demonstration, lest so happy an opportunity to advertise their industry be allowed to slip by unused. Theirs was a work of supererogation, for the unbidden crowds did their own demonstrating. The crowds from Bloomsbury and Whitechapel and Putney and Upper Tooting, the crowds that never saw Ellen Terry and never heard of Lenine or Edison or D'Annunzio, the crowds that go to bed tired and get up in the morning without the animation of a lively hope, but who, before going to bed, manage to stroll down to the corner picture palace and drop a tear over Mary Pickford—it was these who took charge. They hung from factory windows and mounted running-boards and fell under the wheels. To the authorities was left only the task of protecting the visitors from being

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trampled to death or having their clothes lovingly torn off them. In this they were not entirely successful, but then only thirty policemen were detailed as bodyguards.

The public passion was to see, in the flesh, these two mimes whose dancing shadows had played so large a part in the humbler public's festivities for many years—to see (if possible to touch) Douglas Fairbanks and more especially to see, touch and kiss Miss Pickford. The intention was amiable and the process may sound agreeable; but when, on the way from the station to your rooms, ten thousand people approach you with beaming countenances but a nonethe-less grim determination to pet and fondle you or die in the attempt, it is a trifle dismaying.

The English used to twit the Americans in France with the charge that while the Tommy was fighting for liberty, the Yank was only too obviously fighting for souvenirs. It is now all the harder for them to explain why our Mr. Fairbanks had to have the buttons replenished on his coat from seven to eight times a day. It is rather thrilling for a young woman to have strangers lurch forward and kiss the hem of her skirt, but after a large urban population has tried to repeat this maneuver, the dress begins to show signs of wear, even when its occupant herself may be bearing up splendidly.

The desire for autographs took on the nature of an epidemic. People waited firmly in line all night to get the coveted signatures, and when the applicants are right there, adoring but watchful, you can't employ a rubber stamp or get an understudy to do the work. The signature-seekers were not only importunate but occasionally inopportune. Once at the Garden Party, when Mary was in danger of being enthusiastically but fatally trampled underfoot, her husband rushed to the rescue of his lovely and prosperous bride, lifted her in his justly-celebrated arms and started to plow his way to safety. Just as he was speculating hotly whether fame was all that had been said of it, just as he was wondering whether he and she would make the shore, a bewhiskered face came closer out of the close-pressing crowd and an eager voice shouted above the din: "Oh, Mr. Fairbanks, do stop and give me your autograph!"

Tribute in Kind

IT WAS not all demands. There were invitations galore and gifts innumerable, handsome gifts of jewelry and paintings and scarves, strange gifts of tidies, painfully embroidered with the entwined monograms of F and P, which must have baffled our Custom House to appraise, and heart-rending gifts of jam, toilsomely prepared for her and bread fondly baked, cooked in some suburban kitchen and delivered at the hotel, lest little Mary should have to eat that dreadful restaurant cooking.

The crowds blocked Piccadilly for hours and everybody was infected. There is an old story of some rich Americans at Henley, who, standing near the royal barge, amused themselves by tossing pennies into the water to watch the urchins dive. Running out of coppers and silver coins, they began at last to throw gold sovereigns. (You see it *is* an old story.) Up rushed a guard in panic. "My word, governors," he cried, "don't do that. You'll have the King diving." It may have surprised Doug and Mary a little that the King did not call, but at least he had his car drawn up on the distant outskirts of the crowd, and for twenty minutes watched the seething multitude that had turned out with an interest they would be unlikely to show for any one else in the world, save his own son and heir.

Garden Party Roughhouse

THAT garden party incident was rather amusing. It is an annual June festival here for the Benefit of the Theatrical Orphanage, and a dazzling patronage is always assured. The disturbing visitors went as the guests of George Grossmith, the actor-manager whose father was such a favorite in the old Gilbert and Sullivan days. He lunched with them beforehand at the Ritz.

"Have you any policemen ready?" Doug asked nervously.

His host gave a well-bred but none the less genuine laugh.

"What rot, dear old chap," he said. "I grant you the mob has been rather stiff, but the garden party is quite a different matter. The people there will be a sophisticated lot. They'll be frightfully cordial and interested and all that. But they'll leave you alone. Don't worry your silly old bean about that."

After the party, the directors complained bitterly that no one had had time to see or buy a thing. As for the immaculate Grossmith, he looked as though just made up to do a turn in the halls as a tramp juggler.

Of course it was mob madness, and certainly in the matter of movie fans (or cinema enthusiasts, as the English call them for short) it is still true that the higher up you go, the fewer. It was interesting, therefore, to watch the reaction of what, for lack of a better term (though it does let in a lot of very dull people), must be called the intellectuals. Their chief emotion was surprise, tinged with annoyance. There was a slight trace of disgust, a notion that somehow it was all very American and commercial and ill-bred, a notion not examined too thoroughly, for after all, the only two Americans involved in the matter were comparatively passive. All they did was bow and smirk from the balcony. It was only too obvious that the English were doing the rest.

The newspapers helplessly reflected the popular excitement. The headlines sang of Doug and Mary. The sandwich-men, those faded peripatetics who carry the appetizing but sometimes misleading placards up and down the London streets—such as "Reds Routed" or "Lady Astor's Divorce," were now gaudy with declarations like this: "Mary Mobbed" or "Mary Ordered Out of England." These were implicit tributes in themselves, for this film favorite is probably the first woman so thoroughly to identify herself with what is after all not only a grand old name but a fairly common one. It is no great achievement to copyright the name of Geraldine or Victoria. It has been done. But think of being known the world over as Mary!

Editorially the newspapers took sides, for in English journalism there still lingers a good deal of the old Eatanswill animosity. There were leaders tinged with regret for the old days when the war had not made the English volatile. There was derision for queer Americans who spend their honeymoon as publicly as possible—for all the world like setting up housekeeping in a shop-window. On the other hand there were leaders that talked about the "Little Sweetheart of All the World" and compared the astonished but doubtless gratified Miss Pickford to Mary, Queen of Scots. While the Northcliffe journals wrote long rhapsodies about "Heroine Worship" and intimated that in some way international amity was being promoted on a grand scale, the Beaverbrook press hinted darkly that it had all been "arranged" (there are several American corporations that would offer something handsome in the way of salary if they could have the name and address of the man who did the arranging) and suggested that after all, there were more important and wonderful people in the world than the Fairbankses. Rhabindranath Tagore, arriving quietly a day or so later from India, gazed upon the distinctly select party of welcome allotted to himself and straightway gave out an interview on the chronic idiocy of the man in the street.

Punch was amused but sarcastic.

"A turkey with four legs has been born in Purley," the old weekly announced. "This attempt to divert attention from the visit of Miss Mary Pickford seems to have failed miserably."

When Charlie Comes to London

AND again, writing on the assumption that Charlie Chaplin must already be buying his ticket for London, *Punch* observed:

"Since his promised visit to our shores can not be delayed long, he has already begun elaborate preparations for traveling in safety. He is growing a large beard and is learning to walk with his toes turned in. A number of his teeth will be blackened out during the whole of his European tour and his hair will be kept well-ironed and cropped short.

"He has engaged a complete staff of plain-clothes pugilists to travel with him everywhere and to stand guard outside his bathroom door. They will also surround him during meal-times to prevent his admirers from grabbing his food to hand down to their children as heirlooms.

"He is being measured for a complete outfit of holeproof clothing and his motor will be a Ford of seventeen thicknesses, with armored steel windows and fitted with fire-aid accessories, including liniment, restoratives and raw steak. His entourage will include a day doctor, a night doctor, a leading New York surgeon, and a squad of stretcher-bearers.

"It has been suggested to him that a further precaution would be not to advise the press of the date of his arrival, but that he considers would be carrying his safety-first measures to a foolish extreme."

The English actors were speechless. One American actress who had been expatiating a good deal on the painful unfriendliness toward Americans in London this year, was said, plausibly enough, to have felt some annoyance. The mere onlookers among the Americans, however, were vastly entertained. Those who hang about the Crillon bar and, just before high-noon or cocktail time, are to be found preempting all the comfortable

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chairs in the great Savoy lounge, shook with laughter and vowed they would never again let an Englishman treat them loftily. Personally they preferred to stay near their drinks, where they strove casually to induce the impression that, at home, seeing Doug and Mary was a daily experience.

Meanwhile, the mere mobs boiled and frothed around Piccadilly, clamoring for the bride and groom to come out on the balcony. When Doug would kindly pretend to fall off it and then catch himself perilously by one hand, there would be howls of delight from myriad throats. During these dare-devil didoes there would be a look of the prettiest solicitude on the bride's well-known and exquisitely sensitive face.

The Romantic and the Real

A ROMANTIC clerk, watching her hungrily from some window across the way, might say to himself: "I wonder how it feels to have such adulation. What a marvel she is! What a power she has! Why she could lift her voice like Joan of Arc and lead the whole world to freedom or glory or something. I wonder what her thoughts are at this moment."

Of course no one knows, but perhaps they ran something like this:

"Goodness, what a mob! It would make a good picture, if we were only ready for it. I do hope Doug doesn't mind the way they're starring me above him. After all, poor boy, he hasn't had a picture exhibited here for two whole years. But it must be pretty hard for him to be known just as Mary Pickford's husband. What a wonderful site that old Devonshire House across the way would make for a picture palace. It really ought to be torn down. I must speak to Northcliffe about it. I could put in—let's see, the pound is three dollars and ninety-one cents to-day—yes, I could spare two hundred thousand pounds. We could get the rest from local capital. Darn the income tax anyway. It makes things so hard for one. Oh dear, I suppose I haven't waved for two minutes, but my arm is black-and-blue. I must remember to see about that money that's overdue from China. Fortunately, it's all going very well in South America. I wonder if I could see Barrie for ten minutes and coax the picture rights of some of his plays from him. It really is too absurd to let any one else play Peter Pan. My stars, but my neck is tired! If I have to bow for five more minutes, I know my head will come off. Doug is simply indestructible."

But, after all, this is just guessing at what was going on inside that supremely decorative head. What is not guesswork is that of all the surprise felt in London just then, the least was felt by Doug and Mary. They had had advance notice. They had had letters. For many years there had been letters pouring in from every corner of the world, from Rio de Janeiro and Singapore and Glasgow and Osaka and especially from every town and village in England. Mary's mail has often reached the grand total of ten thousand a week, which means night work in the California office where her seven scornful but well-paid secretaries open, read and answer them. For it must be kept in mind, in any consideration of Mrs. Douglas Fairbanks as an international phenomenon, that she is not only the little Sweetheart of all the World and a pretty curly-headed dear, but also a worker as tireless as Edward Payson Weston, and a business woman with the acumen of Hetty Green. She is not only a marvel but a magnate. There is some pardonable dispute as to whether she is the leader of an art. There is no question whatever that she is the head of an industry.

Photo by Souvenir Shop, Paris.

On the roof of the Crillon—all Paris at their feet.

"Ordered Out of England"

THE bride and groom stood it about three days. Then they fled. Mary was all tuckered out. That's what the "Ordered Out of England" headlines had meant—doctor's orders. Then, too, they both may have felt that it was wise to go at hightide. If they stayed, they would either be fondled to death or would live to see their importance dwindle. Either prospect was painful. So they fled.

They took refuge in Lord Northcliffe's country house in Kent. That astute publicist's eyes had been visibly widening at all this evidence of a medium he did not control. Probably he directed his secretary to have five new cinema corporations formed before noon of the following Tuesday. Certainly, he adopted Doug and Mary. He bore them off to his estate and let them rest. It was a clandestine flight, but by next day the neighborhood appeared aware of the honor that had befallen it. The light of dawn showed a fringe of heads on the high garden wall—heads and cameras and autograph books.

Then came a week-end at the Duke of Sutherland's and then the flight from England. If the English trip had been "arranged" to the extent that the approach was no secret, the adventures on the Continent were truly impromptu. There is no use pretending that the two stars tried to slip quietly and unobserved into England's ken, but on the Continent they moved stealthily. At The Hague they hired a car and just started in a general southerly direction. There was Holland, where a left-handed invitation to visit the Crown Prince was coldly declined, and where an attempt to get a look at the Kaiser was as coldly rebuffed. There was Coblenz, where the two spent the Fourth with the troops, dwelling nervously in a fine house from part of which a German family had been ejected by the military for their benefit. There was Switzerland, where Basle is still staring open-mouthed down the road the party took. Doug arriving at ten in the morning, had bought a Fiat car, taken possession, engaged a chauffeur, ordered and received his livery and departed by five o'clock of the same day. They say that once before a man had succeeded in buying a car in Switzerland in less than a week. But it had taken him six days.

If Doug had played second-fiddle in

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England, it was Mary's turn on the Continent, where her bouncing young husband is the better known. In Italy, the recognition was continuous and in Venice, all the other gondolas called "Lampo, Lampo" after them. Doug thought it meant something was the matter with their tail-lights, but it seems that in the Italian picture palazzos he is billed and known only as Lampo—that means Lightning—just as in France the great Chaplin is known only as Charlot.

Then came France. They arrived at the frontier by way of the Riviera. It was July fourteenth and the border-line authorities were all celebrating. Fortunately the man in charge was a picture fan. He was just starting to tell them that they would have to wait for American help when recognition dawned in his astonished eyes.

"*Mon Dieu, c'est Doog-lass!*" he cried, and kissed him on both cheeks. Fairbanks was thus saluted quite often in France. It was a new experience for him.

Frantic French Film Fans

AT PARIS the rioting was resumed. Great swarms of Parisians met them at the Halles, the dramatic and musical artists then in town fêted them with a wine-drenched luncheon, and the roof of the Crillon (the same hotel that housed the luckless American Peace Commission) afforded them their only privacy. At the luncheon Mary spoke very prettily in French. Doug, however, knows only eight words of the language and those are a miscellaneous and ill-assorted lot like "officier" and "maison" and "boulevard" and "liaison." But by saying these rapidly over and over and gesturing furiously and showing all his teeth, he made a great hit. The people nearest him were probably a little confused, but the majority of his audience, while missing the drift of his remarks, caught the enthusiasm and pounded their glasses with loud cries of "*Bravo! Bravo! Un bon pour Doog-lass!*"

The climax of the luncheon came when the great Monsieur Max exclaimed:

"Doog-lass, never had I thought to play again a secondary rôle, but if you will come back to France to play *d'Artagnan*, I will be your *Richelieu*."

That is how it happened that you will soon see "The Three Musketeers" on the screen and also how it happened that on their last night the bride and groom stole out of the hotel at midnight on business. They hired a battered *sapin* and drove to the Marais to study the narrow streets by moonlight for their possible locations. The old *cocher* was a picture fan and whenever a *sergent de ville* molested the midnight prowlers, he had only to whisper: "*Mais, c'est Doog-lass et Mary Peek-for*'" to have the authorities not only apologize warmly but abandon their posts to form a guard of honor.

When the bridal party finally left France, it was on the *Olympic*, sailing from Cherbourg on July twenty-first. At last they were among Americans, sophisticated, cosmopolite Americans, each secretly determined to remind the adulated (and presumably addled) pair that they must come back to earth once more.

"I suppose they'll be swaggering all over the ship, quite pushing us into the gutter," one would say. "It will be rather a come-down for them."

Unfortunately for the full effect of this splendid plan to snub the celebrities, the young married magnates spent almost the entire voyage in their suite, working from dawn to dusk on scenarios, unanswered letters and the like. They could afford only a brisk half-hour's turn on the broad promenade deck at sundown, during which brief time, all the steamer-chair occupants contracted permanent strain of the eye muscles in their effort to see them without seeming to.

The Most Famous Woman in the Universe

AFTER all, was it so surprising that the English people should have been clamorous to see just once in the flesh one whose pictures had been their delight for ten years? Was it any wonder that there should have been a stampede to look on one whose name is known to more people in the world than that of any other woman of her time? Queen Elizabeth was not so internationally famous as Mary Pickford. For that matter, counting China and Australia and South America and all, it is probable that Napoleon was known to a smaller percentage of his contemporaries than is Charlie Chaplin.

Nor, despite *Punch's* dark allusions to the impending Chaplin, is there any need to fear that it will happen again. Not with the present generation of movie stars, it won't. It can't. After all, Doug and Mary are themselves, on and off the screen. But if the quietest, shyest, most sad-faced little comedian of them all were to voyage overseas in quest of a like evidence of fame, he would have to happen along in make-up, with his comic shoes, his cane and derby and all. He would have to flutter with his feet. Whereupon, the crowds would say: "Why, the fellow is showing off" and look the other way. Yet if he just slipped over to England he would not be recognized. He would be jostled in the street, unknown, just like an ordinary tourist. And that would be terrible.

The Wedding Journey

By Amelia Josephine Burr

SMILING, a woman rose and changed her seat
That they might be together. There they sat
With pink confetti on his smart straw hat
And rainbow telltales caught among her frills.
Resplendently new-shod, their eager feet
Were light and beautiful upon the hills
Of radiant hope—their shyly meeting eyes
Made of the smoky car young Paradise.
Filling a paper cup, they tried in vain
To freshen into fragrant life again
The limp white roses of her crushed bouquet,
That all their world might be as glad as they.
Wistfully tender grew the smiling face
Of her who watched them, who had changed her place
That those young hands might meet by stealth and cling,
Sharing the wealth of that bright wedding-ring.
Then, all at once, she turned a different smile
Sweet as the bride's expecting—who may guess
What answering smile of other, mated days . . .
Blankly she realized the dusty aisle.
So might one maimed, forgetting, strive to raise
His missing arm, and wake to emptiness.

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Intangibles

By Frederick Orin Bartlett

Mr. Bartlett gives us here another of those stories of his that open the human underside of business life. To like this you have to be eager about not only business, but also about the human folks who, after all, make business. There'll be another from him soon, called: "Queer Noises."

THE least important person in the luxurious offices of R. F. Knight & Son, of New York City, dealers in oil securities, was, undoubtedly, Miss Nathalie Wadsworth, who operated the multigraphing machine. She did not amount to a hill of beans or a row of pins or anything else of minor consequence, for, although she filled her position capably enough, it was more the machine than she who was of value. Viewed as a net quick asset—a feature R. F. Knight & Son were always obliged to consider in their business—she would not have inventoried as much as a desk.

It can easily be understood, then, that to those accustomed to dealing in enterprises placed on the market in million-share lots, par value five dollars a share, Miss Wadsworth looked like a pretty small proposition.

In other ways, however—intangible little ways—Miss Wadsworth showed up to better advantage. Yet no one seemed to appreciate this except Billy Talbot, who represented Knight & Son on the curb and himself everywhere else. And he realized that to refer to Miss Wadsworth's personal attributes as real assets was merely a pretty figure of speech. They were not even substantial enough to be taxed, which is getting assets down to as fine a point as it is possible to get them on this plane. Nor were they easily inventoried.

Studied in detail, Miss Wadsworth was not strikingly beautiful; and yet Talbot, when out of the office, could call her to mind as vividly as though she stood before him, when the most he could ever recall of prettier girls was the fact that they were pretty. Miss Wadsworth never attempted to do anything in particular with her hair, and yet it was difficult to forget the fineness and gloss of it. There was nothing especially significant about her gray eyes except that they were impressively honest, or her straight nose, or her gentle mouth; but she had not been established in that outer office a week before he found himself carrying around in his mind, as in a locket, the picture she made when seated pertly independent before her work.

She was quite as unrelated to this work as the machine she operated—quite unrelated, in fact, to the whole office. Somehow Talbot placed her in a class with the gallery of débutantes who appear in the photogravure section of the better Sunday newspapers. She possessed the same poise, the same direct challenge that meets a man eye to eye, the same superiority to setting or circumstance. Intangibles!

Talbot was not given to that kind of appreciation either. His standard of beauty was based upon the successes of roof-gardens where graces were displayed upon the surface and a man was not obliged to guess at much of anything. There was Fifi Collette now featured, who could have had Talbot for the asking and did not ask, perhaps because in the dollar seat which was his limit she could not see him. But, man dear, she had golden hair that took all sorts of marvelous turns, eyes that flashed to the last row of admiring men, color and curves and rustling silks and jewels—all so clearly and definitely displayed that a press-agent could catalog them without effort as Exhibit A, Exhibit B, Exhibit C. So could Talbot, while he observed her on the stage. But after that it was necessary for him to pay another dollar in order to refresh his memory.

THIS was a decided disadvantage because at this time he did not have many dollars. On the salary of fifty a week he lost pretty consistently one-half of it in optimistic attempts to beat the market. Out of what was left he was obliged to waste something on board and room. The remainder he invested in dress and entertainment. He dressed as well as his means allowed as a matter of personal taste, for he enjoyed good clothes and wore them well. Of medium height and slight, with a thin, nervous face, alert black eyes, a rather tense mouth, he would have been selected in a crowd of a hundred as one of a half-dozen men for a job demanding intelligence, nerve and initiative.

He revealed something of this first quality in being the only one of the numerous young fellows who hustled in and out of the office of Knight & Son to recognize the fact that Miss Wadsworth was not quite the usual young woman employed in the down-town district; he revealed the other two qualities in venturing to speak to her when he had nothing whatever to do with her branch of the business.

He took a chance late one rainy afternoon after Golden Flow, par value five dollars, which he had bought at fifty cents, slumped to forty, cleaning him out of half a week's salary and leaving him a bit lonesome.

"I hope you didn't read any of those last circulars you sent out on Golden Flow," he observed.

"It never occurs to me to read any of them," Miss Wadsworth replied pleasantly enough. "But why?"

"It would probably have cost you money."

"How?"

"The stuff slumped ten points to-day."

"Really?" she answered with less interest than she would have shown had he informed her it was now raining.

"I ought to have known better myself, but this one sounded so darned good I thought I could get in and get out. Well, I got out all right."

"You mean you lost?"

"I sure did. Our Mr. Knight is now picking the bones."

"I'm sorry you lost," she returned sincerely, which was the last thing in the world Talbot expected her to say. He had not been looking for sympathy, for he was not even pitying himself. A man must take his losses with his gains. On the strength of a tip he had picked up in the last half-hour he was already planning a campaign on Gusher—a proposition Knight & Son were just placing on the market. If this well did ten per cent. of the gushing the firm was doing for it, his fortune was, for the twentieth time that year, assured.

"I'm sorry I made you sorry," he answered. "To prove it I'd take you to the movies to-night if you'd go."

"Thank you, but I never go to the movies."

The remark Talbot made to himself was, "Some class!" but out loud he endeavored, as jauntily as possible, to cover up what he felt to have been a bad break. Though he ran the risk of committing himself beyond his resources, he ventured boldly:

"There's a good show at the Roof Garden."

"Really?"

"How'd that suit you?"

"I have an idea it would not suit me at all, but I've never been there."

"Like to try?"

"No, thank you."

"Well, what in thunder do you do when you get through work?" he exclaimed, frankly puzzled.

"I go home."

HE SHOT a swift glance at the fourth finger of her left hand. No ring of any kind was in evidence.

He nodded sympathetically.

"It's hell to be poor. But believe me, little woman, luck is bound to turn. The old man is planning to splurge on this Gusher proposition and I'm going to climb aboard."

"That's what you did before, isn't it?"

"Right. But this time I'll know when to get off."

"Good luck," she smiled.

Then she turned back to her work in so decided a fashion that it left Talbot nothing to do but to go on about his own affairs. This was always a sufficiently engrossing occupation to keep him thoroughly engaged during business hours. It was not until the curb was closed and he had cleaned up the odds and ends of

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details around the office that he began to grow restless, began to feel keenly the humiliation of his position in this great city. There was only one thing he needed to have this old town throw wide open its gates and welcome him like a brother. Money was all he lacked—just money. Give him that—not a picayune little salary, but a real killing that would allow him to stuff his pockets full—and the world was his.

There was nothing to it after that. These rows upon rows of houses, that now bordered the streets like barrier walls when he went out upon them at the close of the day's work, would then swing open their hospitable doors. Cafés, stores, theatres, homes, which now had posted at their entrances flunkeys to warn him away, would pass the word along to these same flunkeys to greet him with a smile. Gay colors, music, pretty faces, silks and choice foods, entertainers to make him laugh and weep and sigh and keep him on the sharp edge of life, stood waiting upon his success.

"Hurry," they seemed to say. "We are ready. The only passport you need is a bit of gold. Get it quickly and join us."

And with a bit of luck this bit of gold was so easily gotten. He saw it done every day upon the Street. He had seen Knight & Son do it a dozen times and helped them do it. The firm was alleged to have made half a million in Golden Flow, and before this had made again and again half-millions. It was as easy as making half-dollars if only a man did it on a big enough scale. He could do it himself once he got a start. He might be doing it within six months if the Gusher went well.

To-morrow—that is what kept Billy Talbot going. The next day might see the golden snowball start rolling down the golden slope, growing in size with each click of the ticker, until finally he gathered it into his waiting arms. To-morrow is what made it possible for Billy Talbot to edge into a white-tiled automatic lunch that evening and in sepulchral splendor dine at dinner-time on breakfast food; to-morrow is what made it possible for him to hold his head erect when hurrying along Broadway toward his dull room; to-morrow is what made it possible for him to wave his hand in gay greeting as he passed the poster still announcing Mademoiselle Collette at the Roof Garden. And yet, oddly enough, when he finally reached that room his thoughts switched swiftly to Miss Wadsworth.

"She's probably home by now," he thought. Then below his breath he added, "Poor devil!"

II

THERE are those on the Street who still talk about the Gusher because it did the last thing in the world that Knight & Son expected of it; it gushed. Purely for advertising purposes, and to cover the law, Knight senior actually sank a well. Nothing makes a more dramatic picture than a skeleton-like derrick erected beside a small shed with steam coming from pipes. It might properly be used as an emblem of Industry. Knight had these snap-shots sprinkled all over the cheaper Sunday papers and on the strength of them boosted the stock from ten cents, par value five dollars, of course, to forty cents.

Out of a conservative part of these proceeds he kept boring to lend flavor to his daily reports that he was now down so many feet. The stock went to fifty. Then one afternoon Knight received a frantic telegram. And somehow Billy Talbot got wind of that telegram. What he did in the next hour is remembered by those who perhaps have forgotten the Gusher. For on the strength of what he made in the next two days, as the stock sky-rocketed to ten dollars, the press seized upon him and created for the entertainment of their readers one of those eternally fascinating characters, "The Boy Broker," or, as others chose to entitle him, "The Boy Plunger."

HIS winnings were variously estimated to be from one million to five, and his picture was taken both entering and leaving the offices of Knight & Son. Young women reporters described him as both daring and handsome—which within certain limits was true enough.

As a matter of fact, when Billy Talbot finally escaped from the bedlam which for forty-eight hours had surrounded him on the curb and in his hectic sleep, and found it possible to collect his thoughts sufficiently to do problems in simple addition and subtraction, he learned that he was worth, minus the odds and ends of a few hundreds, some three hundred thousand dollars. Which was not so bad considering the fact he had started with only a hundred dollars and his nerve.

Three hundred thousand dollars in cold cash—for before he quit he turned in the last scrap of paper he possessed. Here is where he showed still more nerve, for Gusher was still going strong. Down there by the well the heavy yellow fluid was oozing all over the ground, while in the offices of Knight & Son the heavy yellow metal was oozing all over the floor.

It was a curious spectacle, and no one in a detached way enjoyed it more than Miss Wadsworth. She had a good deal of spare time at this point, for her branch of the work ceased almost entirely. She watched the excited traders hurrying in and out, listened to the babel of frantic voices, and noted the disheveled appearance of wild-eyed Billy Talbot. It was she who, on the impulse of the moment, caught his arm once as he was bolting past her and said in her low even voice:

"Keep your head, Mr. Talbot."

Billy stared at her as at some being from another world.

"I've got it this time," he exclaimed in a voice grown husky from shouting.

"Don't let it get you," she warned steadily.

He was off again, but somehow her words stuck in the back of his head. He heard them at the moment the stock crossed ten, and he was tempted to hold on for fifteen. He had set ten as his limit, but with things moving as fast as they were, fifteen looked certain. Every point meant thirty thousand dollars. That was a lot of money—easy money. But he sold. And after the last sale he resigned from his job.

He had to do this. The press talked about his nerve and his coolness, which was right; but when it was all over he was as lifeless as a dead battery. He needed recharging. He went up-town, engaged a room at one of the big hotels, crawled in between the clean linen and slept for twenty-four hours.

When Talbot finally did awake, it was to some of the most satisfactory dreams of his young life. He had, as they say, the world by the tail. Nothing now remained but for him to make the most of this commanding position—to make the world give up to him all that so far it had withheld. He had been existing; and from now on he meant to live.

No one ever started with more confidence or enthusiasm. He knew exactly what he wanted. In brief, it consisted of pretty nearly everything of which for the last three years he had been deprived for lack of means. There were certain obligations to relatives and acquaintances that he meant to pay off as debts, but the rest was his. It was peculiarly his because he had no immediate family and no close friends. He had gone out on his own and played the game alone and won alone. Now his winnings were for him to enjoy alone.

FOR an hour Talbot gave himself up to one dizzy plan after another. He had not yet had time to read the papers and so he did not know how expectantly a large public was waiting to see him put some of these into execution. It was not until he came down to breakfast that this new phase of success was called to his attention by an eager young reporter intent upon a Sunday special. Barney had been waiting around ever since seven that morning and it was now ten. The hotel clerk pointed out Talbot as soon as he appeared and Barney stopped him as he was entering the dining-room.

"I want to get a story of your first day as a millionaire," explained Barney. "I'm assigned to follow you until you turn in to-night."

"You are, are you?" snapped Talbot. "Well, just cut it out, will you?"

"I can't do that Mr. Talbot. You're a public character now."

"I don't know how you figure that. If it's advertising dope you're after, I'm out of Gusher."

"Planning a campaign on something else?"

"You betcha; on breakfast," answered Talbot. "I'm through with the market."

"You *must* have hit it right. I'll hang around until you've eaten. I want to get a line on what you order."

Talbot sidled away; but evidently the word had been passed around, for he found the head waiter addressing him by name and solicitously consulting his taste in the matter of tables.

"Anywhere out of sight of that hawk of a newspaper man," said Talbot.

He was given his choice of corner tables and selected the nearest. And here for the next hour he thoroughly enjoyed himself. He was hungry, his time was his own, and he chose from the menu thoughtfully and at will with not the slightest respect for the tiny adjacent figures that heretofore had always governed his taste, and curbed his appetite. He had that morning some three hundred thousand dollars on deposit with the Knickerbocker Trust. When he had time to invest this in Liberty's, as he intended, he would have an income of around twelve thousand a year—a thousand dollars a month. Not an extravagant sum, but more than enough to allow him full indulgence in the matter of meals. If not, then he could draw on

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his principal. He did not intend to be held in bondage by that. He did not intend to be held in bondage by anything. He meant to use this money, all of it, as he chose; to test to the limit the best that life contained.

That was his mood this morning, but even so he was surprised at how little headway he made in this his first venture.

After his grapefruit, a bit of tenderloin, his coffee and rolls, he was through. The bill, everything considered, was not so much, and less than a full hour had been consumed. Barney was waiting for him.

"Enjoy it?" inquired the reporter.

"You bet. You're the only little fly in the ointment I've found so far. Cut it out, will you?"

"Oh, don't mind me."

"Very well, I won't," answered Talbot.

Which is quite the wisest stand he could have taken. It was not long before the press dropped him. After it had described what he ate, what he wore, and his new quarters at the Barchester into which he moved almost immediately, they were practically done with him. For a little while longer they kept half an eye out hopefully, but nothing sensational developed, and they finally dropped him altogether—dropped him, as they so often do, at the very point where his life began to get interesting.

IF BARNEY had only known it, the tip to have followed up was Miss Wadsworth, and yet he might not have got very far with it at that. As a matter of fact, Talbot himself did not. She was too much of an intangible.

It was at the end of his first week at the Barchester that she came bobbing back into Talbot's thoughts. That had been a wonderful week—a soul-satisfying week. If the press had only been able to get below that beautifully tailored exterior of his to the center that registers sensations, it would have had material enough. That is the kind of reporting that counts. But Talbot was his own reporter and own public—for at least seven days. Relaxing, he gave himself up utterly to the sheer luxury of indulging to capacity his five senses.

His only limit was the limit of pleasurable reaction he was able to secure. This of course cut him off from a lot of rough stuff because he was fundamentally decent. This is why, also, his career seemed to the press so undramatic.

He did not paint the town red because his tastes did not run that way. Even though champagne corks were popping in those days, he did not pop any because he did not care to draw upon the resources of the next day to heighten the excitement of a single evening. He preferred to have his fun more evenly distributed. This was, in a way, a handicap. It took out of Broadway ninety per cent. of its possibilities. It cut him down at once to those things which are open to a normal, healthy-bodied young man who stays sober. His case is not as unique to-day as it was then. But everything else was at his command—all those things which he had missed as a fifty-dollar-a-week man tied down to work for the best part of every day. All the tangible things of life awaited his choosing. Every morning when he awoke he had only to plan what he should do during the day and evening, and at night it was his privilege to review them again at his leisure, knowing that he could sleep as long as he wished.

His program as a rule was to breakfast at ten, enjoy a stroll down the Avenue and back for a bite of lunch at one; then a movie in the afternoon, followed by dinner, a musical show or comedy in the evening, with a look in at the Roof Garden afterward. He ordered his seat now of an agency which landed him in the front rows.

IF MADEMOISELLE Collette did not see him these days, it was her own fault.

In evening clothes he made rather an unusually good-looking figure and might easily have been mistaken for a wealthy young collegian. There were times when Talbot felt quite sure she did see him. There was a feature of her act when she came close to the foot-lights and tossed into the audience a silk garter. This fell into his lap one evening, and somewhat sheepishly he stuffed it into his pocket. He examined it later with considerable curiosity.

In some ways Mademoiselle Collette was not as ravishingly beautiful from the front row as from the balcony. Her rouge and stenciled brows were somewhat overemphasized. This, however, he understood to be a requirement of her make-up. He saw her three times that first week and she saw him, he was sure, at least once.

It was one morning after breakfast that Miss Wadsworth popped into Talbot's head—quite without invitation or apology. It was as he was starting rather aimlessly down the Avenue, for his morning stroll had now become enough of a habit to leave him time to think. This was toward the middle of April and the sun was getting high. Its warmth as it moved across the blue sky suggested spring. But as far as Talbot knew, this suggestion had nothing to do with Miss Wadsworth. He just happened to think of her, that was all, and, thinking of her, began to wonder what she was doing with herself. The Gusher, he knew, was still giving Knight & Son plenty to do without starting any fresh enterprise, and so the multigraph could not be very busy these days. In that case she ought to have more or less time on her hands. In that case—well, he had not dropped into the office since he left, and it would be only decent to pay his respects to the firm.

With a smile, Talbot recalled that piker's invitation he had given her to go wi h him to the movies. He ought to redeem himself for that. He was in a position now to give her a real party. The idea appealed to him the moment it was born, but not wholly on the grounds of redemption. He owed her something for that time when she had steadied him in a crisis, when he needed steadying. He was a cad for not having remembered it before.

But lordy, he would make up for that. He planned it on the instant; a dinner at the finest hotel in town, a taxi to a real show, the two best seats in the house, with a taxi home. As he quickened his pace, he added details like violets and bonbons. He was even tempted to enlarge his munificence beyond its legitimate field of action by including any little article that took his fancy in the store windows he passed. There were jewels he felt sure would please any woman, and lacy and silken things, but there seemed to be no way of including these in a dinner invitation.

It was twelve o'clock when Talbot reached the office, which offered a new suggestion. Instead of going in he waited outside to catch her on her way to lunch. He was successful to that extent. He followed her a block and then hurried to her side with uplifted hat. She was surprised enough, but greeted him with a good-natured smile.

"Back at work again?" she asked.

"No," he answered uneasily. "I'm taking a vaction."

"You look as though it were doing you good," she answered after a swift glance at him.

"It is. Are you on your way to lunch?"

"Yes," she nodded.

"I wish you'd lunch with me to-day."

"Thanks," she answered. "But I think I'd best not."

"I'd get you back in time."

"And I'd miss my walk—the best part of my lunch. Please, I must hurry as it is."

She started on and he kept by her side.

"Then to-night, or some night, will you have dinner with me and go to the theatre?"

"Why, it's kind of you to think of me this way, Mr. Talbot, but really—you see I go out so little."

"Then what do you do?"

"I go home;" she laughed at his frank perplexity.

"Of course when there isn't anything else to do."

"I go home because I like o go home," she explained. "You see, I keep house for Grandpa Eaton, and I have a great deal to do."

"That's kind of tough after working all day," he sympathized.

"Not a bit of it."

"You mean you enjoy it?"

"Certainly."

"And you don't ever hanker to break the monotony?"

"I don't have time."

"Well, honest, I don't see what you get out of that."

"I'm living," she answered earnestly. "And it's fun just to live, isn't it?"

"That doesn't look to me like living. Why don't you give yourself a chance? Come along with me some evening and let me show you all you're missing."

She shook her head. "I haven't time to find out what I'm missing."

THEY had reached the dairy lunch she patronized every day. She paused, expecting him to go on. But he did not wish to go on. He much preferred to remain with her, and yet if there was one thing he congratulated himself on having permanently abolished from his life, it was the dairy lunch. He had looked at dead-white tiling until he shuddered at thought of it. And the thick heavy mugs. And the battered silver. And the food as soulless as photographs of food.

"Do you mind if I come in with you?" he asked.

She frowned. Then she tossed up her chin and with a slight shrug of the shoulder led the way.

He ate nothing because he could not. She dined with apparent relish on a sandwich and a cup of cocoa. He tried to appropriate her check, but she balked him.

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Drawing by C. E. Hitz

For a half-hour she toyed with this pretty stone and that, matching each upon her slim white finger . . . .

In less than ten minutes they were upon the street again.

"I must take my walk now," she informed him.

"I may come?"

"But surely you must have a great many things to do," she suggested.

"Nothing just at present."

"With time and all New York to draw upon for amusement?"

"I've been at it a whole week."

"That is such a little while."

"True, but there's another week coming."

She started at a brisk pace on her constitutional and he followed. That is the best that can be said of any invitation to accompany her that he may have thought he had. But it served his purpose.

"I had a fine little party all planned for us," he explained.

"Really?"

"Dinner at the Ritz."

She nodded indifferently.

"The theatre afterward—best in town."

"It was thoughtful of you to remember me. That much I appreciate," she said sincerely.

"But you won't come?"

She shook her head. Then Talbot made the mistake of getting peeved.

"Oh, very well," he concluded with an indifferent air, not nearly as successful as hers because it was not nearly as sincere.

She appeared relieved, and in her relief chatted on almost gaily the remainder of the distance until they were in sight of the office entrance. Then she stopped and held out her hand.

"I'll leave you here. Good luck to you."

He took her hand, but no sooner had he done so than it was withdrawn, and with a bright smile she was on her way to the other side of the street. He started after, but at that moment the big policeman in the middle swung across his path the blunt red sign which read, "Stop!"

III

WITHIN the next week developments occurred in the life of Talbot that promised to justify the hope of the press, but Barney missed the beginning because he was busily engaged just then in satisfying

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the public interest in the life of an absconding bank cashier who had tried, on a salary of twenty-five hundred, to support a wife and three children and at the same time hit the high places on Broadway. It made good reading.

TALBOT was dining alone one evening after the Roof Garden show, in a restaurant famous for its gaiety and its prices. He had come here not because he was hungry—it was rare indeed that he sat down to a dinner with any real appetite—but because he did not care for the other alternative of going back to his suite and retiring. That was a stupid business, and he was finding it difficult to sleep soundly anyway. He wanted the light, the jazz, the tense laughter, the association of others who were drinking deep of life, responding to the thrill of it, to the sparkling joy of it. His soup had been brought, tasted, and removed when a party of half a dozen entered and grouped themselves about a table near his. Among them was Mademoiselle Collette and Ted Bangs—Bangs, who had made a fair-sized fortune in coppers. The two men caught each other's eyes and nodded, and a moment later Talbot saw Bangs whisper to Mademoiselle Collette. Then Bangs strolled across.

"Alone?" he questioned.

"Yes," answered Talbot.

"Come and join us then. We've an extra seat and Fifi wants to meet you."

"I—I'm afraid I'm butting in."

"Nothing to it. Come on."

So there he was—as quickly as that—in the company of Fifi Collette herself. Also in the company of one Einstein, and a Blanche George, and one Carruthers, and Mrs. Brown, and Jimmy Bangs himself. It was Jimmy's party and he seated Talbot at Fifi's left—seated him that near her beautiful arm and her jeweled hand and the radiant beauty of her keen black eyes and her graceful neck adorned with the famous hundred-thousand-dollar necklace. There is small wonder if his own eyes sparkled in return; small wonder that when the glasses were raised in a toast to her he found it difficult to put down his own glass untasted.

"Eh?" commented Fifi to him with her dark brows lifted.

"If you will allow me to drink the toast in something else," he said.

From pique she turned to him with fresh interest. She noted his clear, flushed cheeks. Her eyelashes dropped and she held slightly above the table, as if for her own critical inspection, the fingers flashing with emerald and ruby and diamonds.

"In these?" she questioned as though to test him.

"If those are what you want," he answered.

"*Bien*," she replied with a cynical smile. "We shall see."

"If you'll tell me where to send——"

"I will do better. I will tell you where to find me to-morrow afternoon and I will assist you in the selection."

If she had expected to embarrass Billy Talbot when she threw back her head and flashed her white teeth at him, she must have been disappointed.

"Right," he answered.

She whispered her address.

"At three," she concluded.

"At three."

From the other end of the table Bangs inquired, somewhat peeved:

"What's the joke?"

"A little joke between Monsieur Talbot and me," she answered. "He drinks my health to-morrow in a new wine."

Talbot was game from the start. He met Mademoiselle Collette the afternoon following the dinner—met her for the first time in broad daylight. She did not appear quite as fresh or quite as brilliant, he thought, when he looked her fair in the face, but taking her as a whole, including her wonderful Paris raiment, she was decidedly striking. At any rate she was still Mademoiselle ollette of the Roof Garden, and half New York recognized her as such on sight. Her own car was waiting to take them to the Avenue, and when she stepped out before the city's smartest jewelers a dozen stopped to turn, and when she entered, a dozen clerks sent the news around. Billy was a bit confused, but at that he did not suffer by comparison. Tall, erect, flushed with youth, immaculately, if somewaht quietly dressed, he was an escort of whom mademoiselle could well be proud.

At the gem counter she turned to him with her dark eyes brilliant. "What's the limit?" she asked.

"No limit," he answered coolly.

"Cherie!" murmured Fifi in delight.

SO FOR a half-hour she toyed with this pretty stone and that, matching each upon her slim white finger, holding each to the light, demanding Billy's opinion of each, but in the end relying always upon her own sure taste. Eagerly as a child she played with them, picking them up and putting them down, and like a child finding it difficult to decide among so many. Talbot watched her with a certain pride of being here, with a certain sense of power in his position which allowed him this privilege of pleasing her, with a certain appreciation of her charm and daintiness, but on the whole with not as keen a reaction as he expected. That was curious, because now he was dealing quite definitely in tangibles.

Mademoiselle Collette called for no effort of imagination, and though he knew nothing about stones, they were convertible into terms of money so that one was left with a clear conception of their value. Yet when Fifi made her decision—a ruby of rare coloring and size—and the clerk announced the price as ten thousand dollars, Billy Talbot sought his check-book with scarcely more than amused surprise that he was not getting more for his money.

"It is too much?" questioned Fifi, more concerned, oddly enough, than he was himself.

"Not if it excuses me for last night," he answered.

"Ah," she whispered, "it does more than that."

"Then everybody's happy," he concluded.

The stone was left to be mounted. They returned to the car and he ordered the driver to Sherry's. As he sank into the seat beside her, Fifi placed her ungloved hand upon his and throwing back her head looked at him through smiling, half-closed eyes. But somehow Talbot did not feel the thrill that was his due.

It was not Mademoiselle Collette but her friends, or rather the friends of Ted Bangs, who persuaded Talbot into the little card-game which later in the week cleaned him out of fifty thousand more. He would not have blamed any one for it had the game been straight, but toward the end he discovered that it was not. Even so, the thing he got peeved about was that Bangs deprived him of a gambler's chance and so took all the pep out of the proposition. And of course it was a grave breech of etiquette to mention this, but Talbot did.

He made out a check on the spot, and as he handed it to Bangs he said: "You're not a good sport because you did not give me a run for my money. This game was crooked."

Bangs was encouraged by the fact that his five friends gathered in close behind him at this point.

"You must learn to be a better loser," he answered with an ugly smile.

Talbot was young and he had not been drinking. He looked over the group—five of them—and replied deliberately:

"No. I must learn to keep away from thieves."

"That's rough talk," growled Bangs.

"I'm ready to back it up."

Then Bangs lost his temper. He stepped forward as though to strike and the real game of the evening was on. Talbot waded into the six without a chance in the world, but for five minutes he kept them exceedingly busy. It was always a source of intense gratification to him that before he was stunned by a blow from behind he laid out both Bangs and Einstein; knocked them flat with fair blows from in front.

When he came to he was in his own room with a very sore head and it took him a moment to recall how he came by it. Then he smiled, remembering the expression of pained surprise on Einstein's face when he fell.

THIS was the episode that Barney got hold of, for it seems that at the last moment some one had called in the police. This was the item that Miss Wadsworth heard bandied about the office the next morning.

"They say," declared Miss Mooney, who heard it from young Larkin, who overheard the Son of Knight & Son talking about it, "they say they trimmed him good and he's down and out even if he lives."

"You mean he's hurt?" exclaimed Miss Wadsworth.

"Some one hit him with a chair," nodded Miss Mooney as she adjusted the hair over her ears. "They had to call an ambulance to take him home."

"Home—where?"

"To his royal suite at the Barchester I 'spose. I wonder will they let him lie in state?"

Considering how little an affair of this sort was any of her business; considering, too, how little in the form the narrative reached her, it could be expected to appeal to her sympathies, it was curious how disturbed Miss Wadsworth was about it. But in a way, she felt a certain responsibility in the matter. If she had only accepted his invitation, perhaps—well, anyhow, she knew he had no family in New York. And if now he was badly injured and penniless and alone she was sorry for him. Yes, that was it, she was sorry for him—awful sorry. Of course it was his own fault and of course

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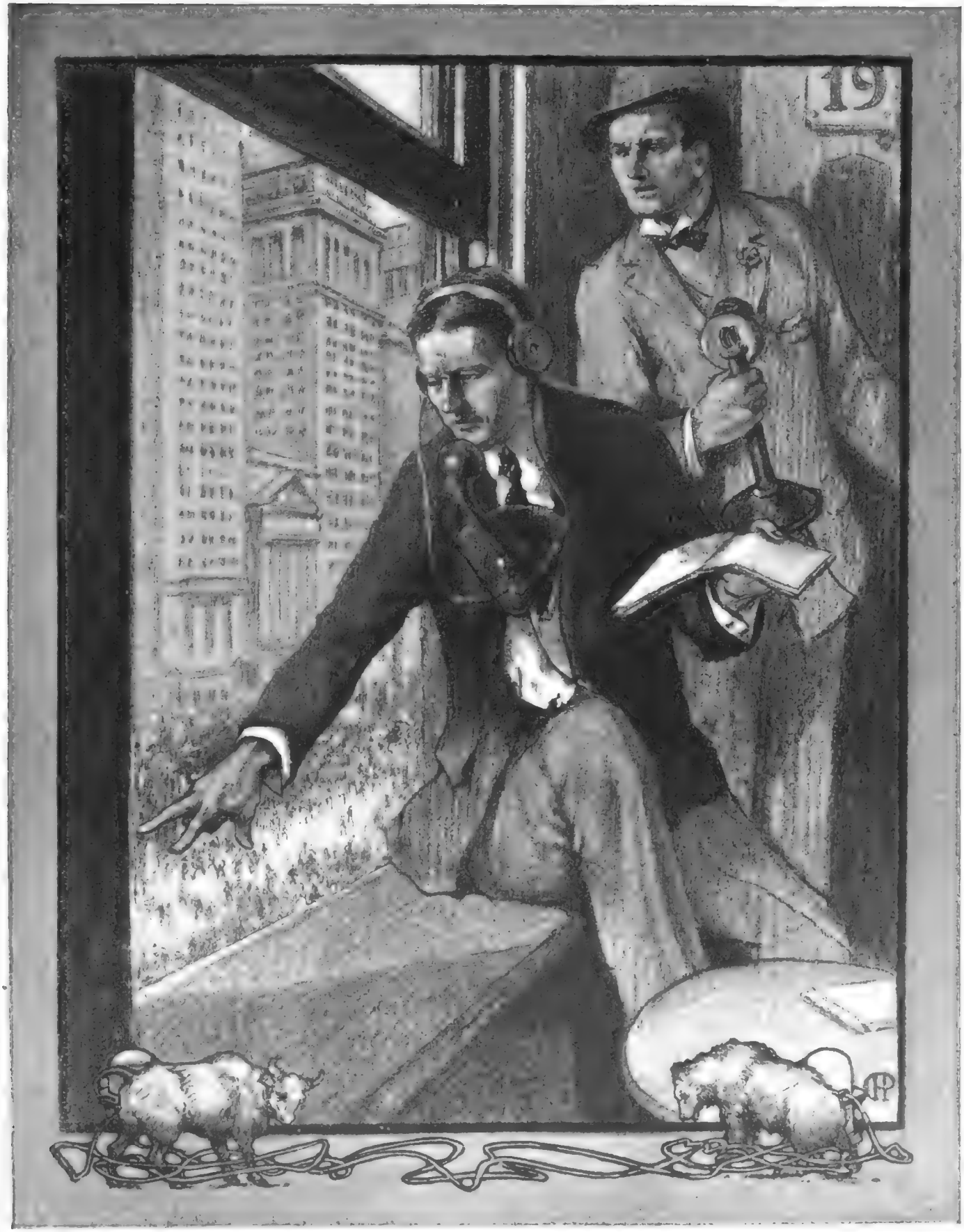

In the offices of Knight & Son the heavy yellow metal was oozing all over the floor.

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it was none of her business, but—she was sorry for him.

All the morning she listened, half afraid, for any rumors. But she heard none—just the same old story over and over again. No one seemed to care greatly about later developments. As far as they were concerned, the yarn was complete and sufficient and satisfactory just as it stood.

The suspense got on her nerves. When she went out to lunch, she was actually afraid to listen to the cries of the newsboys with their special editions; and when she passed a telephone-booth in the dairy lunch she stopped. There was no reason she knew of why she should not determine for herself how he was getting along. Still, even after she picked up the telephone book, she was not fully decided. It was only after she had slipped in her nickel that she knew she was going to do it. Then she asked the clerk if Mr. Talbot was still there, meaning only to find out if he was still alive, and she was at once connected with Talbot himself. She almost dropped the receiver when she heard his voice.

"Who is it?" he demanded.

"No one," she answered paradoxically. "I heard you were hurt and——"

"Miss Wadsworth!"

"I guess it wasn't true, so——"

"It *was* true. But how the devil did you hear?"

"Anyhow, you aren't dead, sos—o good-by."

"Just a moment. I——"

"Good-by," she gasped.

With burning cheeks she came out of the booth and looked around to make sure no one had been observing her. No one paid the slightest attention to her, and yet when she sat down to her cocoa her cheeks continued a brilliant scarlet.

IV

TALBOT, pacing the heavily carpeted room with his head bandaged like a wounded Turk, repeated over and over to himself a fool phrase. It was this:

"She cared—enough to telephone."

Off hand this did not seem to be much to get excited about. The effort had cost her only a nickel and a few moments of her time—just a nickel and a few moments of her time. But that was the very fact that impressed him. He himself had just spent some seventy thousand dollars and a whole month without receiving in return a tenth part of the honest-to-God joy she had furnished him through that trivial investment of hers. Viewed purely from a business point of view it proved that she was the better financier. Yet when he tried to figure out something definite along this line nothing sensible resulted.

For example, he considered converting his whole two hundred and odd thousand dollars into nickels and handing them over to her—four and a half million of them. But this did not get him anywhere. The practical difficulty lay in transferring to her that many nickels. And even if he succeeded in doing this he felt sure that to ask her to slip these one by one into a telephone slot for the purpose of ringing him up would be to ask for too much of her time. Besides he did not intend to remain here the rest of his life.

He meant, as a matter of fact, to get out as soon as the fool doctor would unwind his head. In the meanwhile she might telephone at least once more. She did not, but oddly enough it was this hope that kept him alert; this hope and nothing else. She had cared enough to ring him up once; she might care enough to ring him up twice. It would only cost her a nickel—the twentieth part of a dollar, as the showmen used to explain. Then why didn't she do it? He could not ring her up except at the office, and she would not approve of that. Besides it would not be the same.

Furthermore, as the days went by the less he felt he would be satisfied in merely hearing her voice. He wanted to see her—to talk with her. He wanted to touch her hand. He wanted—good Lord, he found himself wanting a thousand things centering around her; a thousand little things; a thousand intangible things; a thousand things jewelers never heard of.

IT WAS a week before Talbot got out, and then the first thing he did as the simplest way of getting in touch with a certain person was to go to the office of Knight & Son and offer his services to the firm in his former capacity and at his old salary. The Son of Knight & Son was a pretty good spender himself, but he knew what Talbot had made and knew that a man never came back to work unless it was necessary. He was glad enough to have his services, but he gave a low whistle.

"You are sure some sport," he commented.

Talbot grinned a bit foolishly and answered: "I start on the job to-day."

He started on the job in less than five minutes by dropping in on Miss Wadsworth to see how the multigraph machine was working. It was working only too well. She had her back toward him as he entered and appeared very busy.

"Thanks for telephoning me," he began somewhat abruptly.

If the machine itself had spoken to her, she could hardly have been more surprised. Turning quickly she stared at him, unable to speak. She looked quite handsome so—a bit frightened, but all the more attractive for it.

"Why didn't you telephone me again?" he demanded.

"Because—oh, it was a mistake."

"You didn't mean it?"

"I meant to find out how you were. I asked for the clerk and the operator gave me you."

"She was one kind little operator."

"But what are you doing here?" she asked suspiciously.

"Back at work."

"Then you did lose——"

"Lost again," he broke in. "But I've a line on something real now."

"Then—good luck again," she smiled.

Whereupon she resumed the work Knight & Son were paying her to do. That was all right as far as Talbot was concerned. He expected it. But as soon as the curb market closed he planned to be back again.

Just as she was getting ready to leave, sure enough he appeared, looking somewhat tired after his strenuous day. He had been obliged to stand a good deal of chaffing and it got on his nerves.

"Going home?" he asked.

"Yes," she nodded.

Wistfully he watched her as she adjusted her hat—a little old hat that would have made Mademoiselle Collette smile, and yet a wonderfully becoming hat. He watched her as her unjeweled fingers buttoned the simple cloak she had worn ever since he had known her. He watched her as she picked up her purse that probably contained nothing larger than a quarter. And his eyes grew eager and his heart began to pound until he was almost out of breath. She was going home—just home, that was all. God knows where this home was or what it was. That was not important. As long as it contained her, that was enough. Lord, if he could have only an hour of it to take the sharp edge off the night—just an hour before he was thrust back into the desolate empty city.

SHE started from the room and, trembling with excitement, he ventured to follow. He did not know when he would be sent back, but he must follow as far as possible. She looked over her shoulder at him in surprise and some fear, but she said nothing. They went down the elevator together and out into the street together—he like a beggar and she like a princess. So in silence they came to the crossing where the big policeman stood.

"Good night, Mr. Talbot," she said.

A home-going crowd was pressing past them. Under cover of them he seized her hand.

"Don't send me back," he pleaded. "Lordy, it's terrible to be left behind."

It must be that she forgot to release her hand because it remained within his.

"I—I'm sorry for you," she admitted.

"I returned to the old job just for this chance," he confessed. "I've got enough money left but it won't buy anything I want. I'm a beggar, I tell you, unless you let me come with you."

He met her eyes and took a quick breath. The big policeman glanced toward them and swung his sign. Talbot seized her arm.

"See," he panted. "He says 'Go'!"

And as Talbot hurried her dizzily on he turned to the blue-coat.

"Good old sport!" he exclaimed.

Bells

By Robert Nathan

BELLS in the country,
They sing the heart to rest
When night is on the highroad
And day is in the west.

And oh! they came to my house
As soft as beggars shod,
And brought it nearer heaven,
And maybe nearer God.

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Followed by Laughter

By Frank Condon

A pussy-footed usher sneaked down the aisle, leaned over at the end of our row, and held a short whispered consultation with Joel's heart-wrecker.

RESIDENTS, occupants, owners and employees of the Porter ranch believe I'm sick. The old man thinks I am coming down with something malignant, and Mrs. Porter, a kindly old soul, swears it's my liver. I am variously suspected of being bilious and having weak lungs, because, without question, I do present a gaunt and miserable appearance that would fool any one. Yet it is none of these familiar ills.

I am just as well as ever I was, and there is nothing wrong with my heart, except that it's broken. I am slowly emerging from the shadows of a great tragedy, and up to this time I have kept the painful details to myself and Jake; so the folks have concluded I'm a victim of either the yellow jaundice or Riggs's disease.

I doubt if any person ever felt lower in his mind than I do, and of course it is visible on my usually serene and sunny map. Doc Curtis, the Hassayampa pain-killer, has been up to the ranch, on orders from Mrs. Porter, to see what kind of a decline I'm declining into, and all that happened was a very swift crap-game, in which I took seven bucks away from the medical profession. As I said, I'm all right—except my mind. My mind is very poor and it seems to be getting poorer all the while.

The clearest way to look at this recent tragedy is to consider that I draw down sixty dollars a month in cash wages, which in these jumpy and inflated times is about half enough to keep a limber guy in suspender-buttons. My board and lodging is thrown in by Boss Porter, which is a lucky thing for me, because on sixty a month—well, suppose you got sixty a month and had to feed yourself out of it?

I am the undisputed owner in fee simple of one good suit and one not so good. I have four and one-half shirts, some socks that are open to criticism and at both ends, two pairs of boots, one roan horse with a slight touch of the heaves, a set of J. Fenimore Cooper, and a fountain pen that can splash ink all over you, including behind the ears. My miscellaneous possessions are the usual junk of a cow-hand on a large ranch and are worth just about what a thoughtful person would think such things would be worth. Never have I been one hundred and ten dollars cash ahead of the scramble, and at the moment of going to press I owe the boss twenty-five dollars for advanced pay. In brief, I

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am what a conservative bank would call a very miserable asset.

Of course I have my job. I am the unquestioned foreman of the Porter ranch, and the job is there as long as I'm able to move about without a wheel-chair. That's one side of the picture.

The other side brings us to a full view of the Ferguson ranch, which lies eight miles up the Salt River valley from our place, and which is now on the market for six thousand dollars. It is a small, intense ranch, and it has never been worked properly or with enthusiasm, because the Ferguson tribe was a shiftless one. They all died many years before they were buried. Their ancestral domain lies in a fertile triangle against the north shore of Salt River, and it is as sweet and desirable a piece of property as any one can find in Arizona.

From time to time the Fergusons died of *ennui*. Father Bill Ferguson, last of the clan, cashed in a few months ago, and his executors and assigns put the ranch on the market, where it will not stay long, because at six thousand dollars it is a bargain that comes once in a lifetime.

You can grow alfalfa on that land without raising a finger. Fruits and vegetables leap up from the friendly soil and sell themselves for large sums. It contains some of the rarest cotton acres in the state, and the new irrigation system covers it perfectly. It could be bought for three thousand in cash and the rest in two years. And now for the tragedy.

Instead of working for Boss Porter for sixty a month, I might have been the sole owner of the Ferguson ranch. That envied property was as good as mine, and I likewise stood to be the gifted recipient of a slightly used four-passenger automobile, with tan slip-covers and a French horn. The whole deal was practically settled, and I regarded myself as a landed proprietor, a capitalist in a small way and a prospective solid citizen of southern Arizona. Now, everybody thinks I'm coming down with pernicious anemia, when, as a matter of truth, it is the visible disappointment of a broken soul.

In a flowery manner of speaking, it is what could rightly be called my grand chance. Aloysius P. Opportunity came a-knocking at my chamber door, and instead of inviting the old gentleman inside with a friendly smile and asking him what he had on his chest, I opened the door abruptly and kicked him into a vacant lot one block distant, much as one might behave with a chinless person selling the Life and Works of Omar K. M.

I likewise lost a stanch friend and admirer, and these days nobody can afford to lose a friend. No wonder Mrs. Foster keeps on urging me to have my liver overhauled by some good liver-overhauler.

THE friend whom I have lost forever, and who is gone out of my life, is none other than Joel P. Winton, the human lath. He moved away from Arizona in the cool of the morning, very bitter in his mind, loathing me with an intensity that is rarely seen, and cursing in a manner that would have shocked any one not accustomed to mules. I doubt if Joel will ever return to Arizona. His regular base of operations is Chicago, where he probably is situated at this moment, surrounded by a couple of doting parents and a refined atmosphere.

Joel is twenty-six years old, or was, and is worth a small fortune. His old gentleman wears a two-quart hat, owns everything in Chicago over one inch high, and rides down to the Loop every morning in a glass carry-all with two chauffeurs. His mother is a prominent society leader and looks like the vice-president of something. Her picture appears every two weeks in the Chicago Sunday supplements, and whenever she invites friends in for the evening they hang a striped awning over the sidewalk and employ private detectives to lurk in the shrubbery. That's the kind of people the Wintons are—sheer, unadulterated class and lots of it.

In spite of all this culture and wealth, Joel Winton and I were as close as a mustard-plaster and a sprained back for three several months, and it was Joel who agreed to underwrite the Ferguson project to me. It was his slightly used four-passenger automobile with the tan slip-covers which was to descend to me in part payment when he went away, and I was to begin ranching on a large scale and pay him back the principal in the course of time.

It is much worse to be almost the owner of a fine little ranch than never to have owned anything but a safety-razor and one silk shirt, and now I know it. If you have always lived about four dollars beyond nothing, life is simple and serene, and you rarely succumb to intense yearnings after the larger things. But when you almost get to be a bloated land baron, and boot yourself out of the chance, then indeed life becomes one long bilious fever.

THIS Joel P. Winton from Chicago was a nice, cheerful and friendly young man, though extremely thin and nervous when he first appeared. His parents sent him out to us in the hope that we could help him grow a new set of insides, his previous insides having been almost totally used up by the riotous life one is forced to lead in Chicago. He steamed into the Porter ranch one afternoon looking like fifteen-cents' worth of human being, and everybody said he would probably die that night or the next morning.

However, Joel was a long way from final dissolution. There wasn't much to him except hollow eyes, loose skin and projecting bones upon which his clothes hung, but what was there was as tough as fiddle-strings. He prowled about the ranch, wheezing a good deal, and with a frightened, wobegone manner. I looked him over carefully and decided that most of him could be saved.

The Boss introduced us and it appeared that we could see quite a bit of each other if Joel lasted. Boss Porter had once owed money to the Wintons, or Mrs. Porter had attended a tea in Chicago, or there was some such intimate bond between the families. Anyhow, we were all obligated to take charge of this broken-down offspring and see if we could make him over. I was permitted to read the letter which Joel's old gentleman had sent ahead of him.

"What Joel needs," his father explained, "is plenty of outdoor life and association with the rugged type of men found in your country. There is no disguising the fact that my son has been misreared by his mother, and one of the results is his unnatural and confirmed timidity, which you will discover for yourselves. This is not right or normal in a Winton. I myself am not regarded as a timid man, and where Joel gets it is beyond me. I hope you can do something for the boy, because at heart he is a fine lad."

Not such a wildly enthusiastic thumb-nail sketch from a doting father, is it? However, the male parent had all the facts. Joel was good-hearted and a square shooter, but he was more or less squeamish, as one might say kindly. He was horribly afraid of about everything encountered in the day's work. Dogs scared him. Large dogs terrified him. Horses threw him into a panic. Upon finding a lizard on a hot stone, Joel would begin running due east and no human power could halt him. You had to prove to him that an ordinary cow-pony has no immediate intention of biting your arm off unless irritated. A thunder-storm drove him under the bed, and a fist-fight between two annoyed males only increased his already chronic heart-disease. Sometimes it is possible to cure a timid guy like this, and sometimes you just have to let him go on shivering until overtaken by old age.

The thing of first importance was Joel's health, and I became at once his physician and friend. When he arrived on the afternoon train at Maricopa, Jake met him with the ranch barouche and drove him up to the folks. He was cordially received and given a room in the north wing. The Boss had a chat with him before supper, told him to make himself at home and do as he pleased, and that I was to be his pilot.

"Thank you," said Joel, smiling a wan smile. "I think Andy and I will hit it off."

We did too. I got on to his curves in no time at all, and found him to be a regular human, a little spoiled by too much education, but not swelled up. It would never occur to any one to think of him as a millionaire. He seemed more like somebody in the wholesale truck business that you might meet at a card-party.

WHEN he became a bit hardened, I taught him the rudiments of riding a horse, and thereafter we prowled up and down the valley, investigating this and that and taking long breaths. Joel filled himself full of our notorious air and began to show signs of life in the region of the appetite. His first meals consisted of thin toast and hot milk, but in a week he was packing away such regular fodder as rare roast beef, ham, hash and navy beans. I concluded he would live and this belief gradually became general.

It was on one of these excursions up the valley that we came across the Ferguson ranch, and while we sat on a rock and rolled cigarets I told Joel what could be done with the property in the hands of a live man.

"Nice place," he admitted. "Wouldn't be so bad if you owned it, Andy."

"Shucks," I replied.

"Of course if you did own it, you'd have to have a wife."

"If I owned that place," I said seriously, "I could have any single lady in Hassayampa County and about half the married ones."

"It's a nice place," he repeated.

In the course of time, Joel's four-passenger automobile came out from Chicago by fast freight, and we began scouting around more extensively. We gave up riding and began touring, and it was the first time in my life I ever felt real affection for an

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automobile. It was easy to ride in, and all riotous with cushions and upholstery, and ornamented with brass extras fore and aft. It even had a clock that would go. For a while we cavorted over the country near Hassayampa and then we took our first trip to Phœnix, and at this point the fingers of Fate began to tangle themselves up in my otherwise placid existence.

Joel drove that day, and, as usual, we broke no road records, because he is one careful driver. I asked him as a personal favor to let the yellow devil out a bit and he did, until at times we were roaring along through space at twenty miles an hour.

IT HAPPENED to be Saturday in Phœnix, and that afternoon we cast caution to the winds and attended a vaudeville performance at the Olympic Theatre, so called because that was its name. On the program it said that here was the real home of variety. Nothing, they said, ever entered the theatre, unless it was a high-class act, but I can now prove that somebody was lying when that was written.

It was a nice theatre and a new one, too, smelling of plaster and button boards. The ushers were ladies, decorated with turn-down collars and little black ties and wearing the ordinary white trousers used in the navy on parade occasions. One of these females escorted Joel and me down the middle of the house and parked us in the fourth row. There was a seat between us and the end of our row, and at first it remained vacant.

For five minutes we sat there painfully enjoying the opening number, which was the usual news movies, depicting a thrilling flower parade in Fresno, followed by a train-wreck outside Pittsburg, with one car in the river. Then came the ski-jumpers enjoying the first snow. During the ski-jumping I glanced at Joel and observed that something had happened.

A young lady wearing a lace hat and expensive garments pattered down the aisle behind our female usher, examined the remaining seat at the end of the row, and deposited herself therein with the brisk, wriggling movements of a young person about to sit down and look at a show. She removed her hat and patted her hair and fixed eight or nine hundred things that needed fixing, and stuck a hatpin in the seat before her, and unwrapped a pink ribbon from a box of candy and fixed her hair again, and gradually worked herself into shape to enjoy the performance, which was steadily proceeding.

The lady's seat was number one and Joel's was two. Mine was three, and when I looked at the girl I was forced to peek around Joel. A few minutes after her arrival I did so peek, and I discovered that Joel was no longer interested in high-class vaudeville. As they say in the magazines printed on bleached butcher's paper, it no longer intrigued him. There was in action one of the most intelligent troop of trained pigeons I have ever seen, but the act was wasted on Joel P. Winton. As far as Joel was concerned, the man might as well have left his pigeons at home.

My rich young friend was staring intently at the ornamental creature beside him, and he was staring out of the corner of one eye, which is hard on the delicate muscles. He was looking at her with a two-thousand-candle-power look, and at the same time attempting to conceal his

He sat there on his drug-store stool and laughed about seven dollars' worth of vigorous laughter.

act. I am not a person experienced in such things, but I recognize love at first sight.

That's why it was remarkable. Joel, until this moment, had always been honestly and even shiveringly afraid of girls. In his past life he had always walked by on the other side of the street with averted countenance and ready to run. Now, here he was straining the ligaments of his eye on a young damsel and ignoring one of the slickest pigeon acts that ever came to Phœnix.

"Do you know her?" I asked him in what I thought was a polite whisper.

"Can't you ever keep your mouth shut?" he returned in a low tone of intense irritation.

"Oh!" I said, and then shut up as directed.

II

THERE is no use trying to explain the process of falling in love at first sight. To understand it rightly you have to do it yourself, the same as with drowning or having a tooth filled. People who have done their falling in love in a leisurely, calm and Presbyterian manner will never be able to appreciate the mental paroxysms of a young man who looks at a strange girl and begins trembling like an aspen.

Most people actually believe that falling in love at first sight is a myth. This is a mistake. You can fall in love immediately, the same as you can break your leg immediately, only one will hurt worse than the other later on. The other way requires time. In that case the young man knows the girl over a period of years, regards her as a refined person and perhaps admires the way she combs her hair back from her forehead. One night he asks her if she ever thought of getting married, whereat she replies that she never did, and he continues quietly to discuss house-furnishings and wages. Their engagement is then announced and people say they always knew Bill would marry Lucy.

It is not that way with falling in love at first sight. Here the young swain glances at the girl. Something explodes within him just below the liver line, and from that moment he is legally insane and can be committed by persons having the proper jurisdiction. I now watched Joel enter the ranks of these.

She was not a large lady, but she was complete in every detail, and she wore the sort of clothes you notice in the winter pictures of Palm Beach. Her profile was a good deal like that of the lady on the silver dollar, though at first I could see very little of her, owing to the fact that Joel occupied the line of vision. Her nose was small and so was her mouth. She had white teeth and a lovely complexion and she was aristocratic-looking and expensive. I wondered if she lived in Phœnix, because most Phœnix people are honest, though not aristocratic-looking.

THE show went on, just as though nothing was happening to Mr. Winton. Ross and Dunton came out, and if you have never seen that act you have missed much.

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Ross was a large female with yellow hair and Dunton was a small man in a red waistcoat. They sat down on a green bench in front of a pink house and talked and the audience tittered. From titters it passed on to chuckles, and thence to outright laughter. As the act proceeded, it grew funnier. About the middle they sprang their famous joke about the Scotchman and the guineapig.

Never have I heard such mirthful roaring confined within four walls. I had my own mouth twice as wide open as intended by Nature, and Joel was laughing like a wild hyena. When I turned a tear-filled eye beyond him, I saw that the lady was likewise in the last stages of galloping hilarity. I could see the gold filling next her wisdom tooth.

And it was no wonder. Ross and Dunton had a great act and were the funniest two I ever heard. They looked funny. They took that audience by the neck and shook the laughs out of it. When the final outburst came, with the joke about the Scotchman, I turned to see how Joel was enjoying himself, and he was swaying back and forth like a demented pendulum, pounding his knee in wild abandoned glee. Once or twice he turned directly upon the lady at his right and they laughed away together right heartily, facing each other without embarrassment or restraint.

The act ended and the house settled and wiped its eyes. Joel sobered up and spent the rest of the afternoon sneaking crafty looks at the young creature. We walked out behind her and stopped on the sidewalk.

"Andy," Joel began, with an earnestness that surprised me, "did you notice that girl?"

"Did I? To be sure I did."

"Isn't she a wonderful girl?"

"A bird," I admitted.

"I never had anybody affect me like this before," he continued. "I wonder who she is?"

"I'll dash over and ask her," I said.

"No," said Joel. "Do nothing of the sort. What kind of a rough-neck are you? You wouldn't dare."

"Wouldn't I? I've done such things before. I've asked many a girl who she is, and nothing ever happened to me."

The lady had crossed the road by this time and was now engaged in coaxing a small motor-car to betray signs of life. It was one of those inconspicuous black automobiles that can be kept in the henhouse or behind the stairs with the mop. Presently she started it, got inside and rushed away in full cry. Joel stared at her with both eyes hanging down his vest, and when she disappeared we returned to our garage and climbed into our Furious Four.

FROM that fatal hour Joel P. Winton never for an instant stopped talking about the strange lady. It was unusual in him, because for twenty-six years he had never found a woman that interested him or caused him emotion other than fright and perplexity.

During the week that followed he made three trips to Phœnix alone, while I remained behind and toiled, and by his own confession he spent the time roving the streets looking this way and that.

"Did you see her?" I inquired.

"Twice," he said.

"Talk to her?"

"Of course not. I'm no flirt. I never flirted with a woman in my life."

"I believe you," I said.

"I want this girl to respect me," said Joel seriously. "If we ever become friends, I wish her to think well of me."

He then lectured me. He tried to make me see that this girl in Phœnix was far and beyond talking to people, but I know different. Girls are made to talk, and they will and do talk on the slightest provocation, as I know from experience. I've been trying to stop one for three years.

ON THE following Saturday he dragged me back to Phœnix again, and there was a gleam of excitement in his eyes. His conversation during that trip was disjointed and so was his steering.

"Maybe I'll see her," he said, with a frightened grin.

"It's more than likely," I agreed.

"Blue eyes!" he continued. "I noticed the way her hair curls around her ears. I never before thought about marriage, Andy. Do you believe in Fate?"

Then he looked up at the sky and partly ran us into a chuck-hole.

As we approached Phœnix, his excitement increased and I thought some of driving myself, although not proficient.

"She may attend the matinée again," he said, hoping and fearing she would.

"If she knew you were going to be there, maybe she would," I suggested, to encourage him.

"She doesn't know I'm alive. I noticed her hand and there was no wedding-ring on it."

"Which may or may not mean anything," I told him. "There's many a wedding-ring left on the dresser these warm afternoons."

I had my own opinion about the whole affair up to this point. It was quite clear to me. Here was a nice young man from Chicago, worth a couple of millions, and the son of as high-class people as Chicago ever produces. He had everything for which the female usually married the male. Therefore, as I saw it, if this strange lady was not married, and if she knew that Joel P. Winton yearned to know her, she would probably look him up in a reliable finance directory and be close friends before night. That was my view. Joel's was different.

"Andy," he said, after a period of thought, "this is more important than you think. You can't possibly know how I feel about this girl."

"I have a couple of suspicions," I grinned.

"I am wild about her," he said solemnly, "and never was I wild about anybody before."

"All right," I said, refusing to get excited. "What next?"

"That's just it. I don't know what next. You may think this is a careless flirtation, but it is nothing of the kind. That girl is bound to affect my whole future life."

"Good," I said. "You need something to affect your life, anyhow."

"And," he continued, stopping the automobile so he could talk better, "I want you to help me out."

"You want me to help you out. You have a couple of million dollars and I've got a nice disposition, and yet you want me to help you out."

"If you do," he said earnestly, "Andy, if you do, I'll buy you that Ferguson ranch. And when I go back East, I'll give you this automobile."

I sat up so violently that I hit my head on the wind-shield.

"Say that all over again," I urged him, "and just put in the details. What can I do and how can I do it?"

"The Ferguson ranch," he repeated. "You pointed it out the other day and told me how much you admired it. Well, it's yours. You can farm it your own way and pay me back any time. All you have to do is to straighten things out between me and this girl, because I can't do it alone. Is it a bargain?"

I recovered my faculties one by one and shook hands.

"Joel," I said, "you're on. Consider the lady Mrs. Joel P. Winton. I can already see her in whatever they wear in the morning, pouring your coffee and complaining about the milk bill."

"No rough stuff," he warned me, among other directions. "I want your advice and suggestions, because you seem to be a bright fellow in many ways. Frankly, I'm a little backward about women, and the thought occurred to me just now that you could help."

"I can," I said warmly, thinking of the ranch. "You can cease worrying about this lady right now. If she hasn't got a husband, she's going to have one. Unknown to herself, she is already headed straight for the shoals of matrimony."

After this talk Joel seemed more cheerful and I had my first good idea almost immediately. Nothing promotes the flow of high-class ideas like the thought of owning a ranch.

"Step on the button, Joel," I remarked. "We'll start now, and the first stop is the Olympic Theatre."

WE CRASHED off into Phœnix at the rate of seventeen miles an hour and drew up before the stately edifice of mirth.

"What are you going to do?" he demanded, as I climbed out. His old nervousness returned.

"Well, I'm going to find out who the lady is, if I can. You can't win a young bride unless you at least know her name."

I entered the foyer, looked around and held a short conversation with the elegant creature in the box-office. Most box-office ticket-sellers are not human beings and never have been, but this one was different.

"I was here last Saturday," I began, "and my friend and I had seats two and three in the fourth row. There was a young woman in seat one. Can you tell me who she was?"

"No," he answered, looking at me coldly, "and I can't tell you how to raise squabs, neither. What do you think this is?"

I maintained my polite composure.

"She had blue eyes," I explained, "and her nose was the least mite snubbed, and very pretty. She sat there in number one. I'd like to know who she is and here's five dollars out of my pants-pocket."

There was a slight pause during which he stared fixedly at the five, and seemed to be thinking.

"Wait a minute," he said more pleasantly. "It's foolish to hunt, but maybe——"

He then retired into his secret lair and was gone one minute. When he came to

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"Then he began to laugh. If he had walloped me on the jaw I would have felt better about it."

the surface again, his grin had increased.

"Hand the five over this way," he remarked. "It just happens I can tell you the lady's name, because she reserves that seat for every Saturday matinée. Her name is Miss Doris Pearson."

"Pretty," I said, watching him put the five away. "Doris Pearson. Where does she live?"

"You paid five bucks for her name," he replied testily. "I dunno where she lives. Think I'm Who's Who?"

"Much obliged just the same," I added. "I will now spend some money with the concern paying your salary. Reserve for me those two seats which we had last Saturday, and keep right on reserving them, until further notice given by the party of the second part, which is me. The seats next to Miss Pearson's."

HE WROTE down the reservation and accepted some advance payment, handed me the seats for that afternoon, and I walked out into the air and looked for Joel. He was waiting around anxiously in the yellow devil.

"Of course you did not learn her name," he announced with his ordinary optimism.

"Listen, you," I retorted. "Don't play everything from the wrong side of the slate. Be a yesser. You're the kind of a guy that would stand outside the pearly gates and bet even money it wasn't heaven at all. I *did* find out the lady's name. It's Doris Pearson. She sits there in the same seat every Saturday afternoon."

"My word!" said Joel, and he actually beamed at me, this being his first beam since arriving in Arizona. "Now hurry back, Andy, and get those other two seats next——"

"Hush," I said soothingly, "I have them in my pocket. You don't know it, but already I have started in to become the owner of the Ferguson ranch. We will go quietly to lunch and I will explain to you one of the slickest schemes you ever heard."

During the lunch hour I pried Joel's intellect apart and poured it full of my new plan. I opened up on him with what I still believe and maintain is one of the neatest suggestions ever schemed out by a thoughtful young fellow trying to establish his own future. I am a great believer in sudden impulses, and I had one of these quick flashes soon after Joel spoke of purchasing the Ferguson ranch for me. It started when I gazed back and thought of Joel laughing at the Ross and Dunton act, with Miss Pearson, then unknown to us, laughing beside him.

"Mirth," I said to Joel, across the coffee, "is the great leveler. A king and a potato-peeler, laughing at the same thing, are momentarily akin. This is a great human truth. Last Saturday you laughed at Ross and Dunton, and so did every one else, including the lovely creature whom we are going to lure into wedlock. Your face was wide open and you were leaning over toward the lady, as though about to say something. Suppose you had? Suppose you had asked her if that wasn't the funniest joke she had ever heard?"

Joel began to get the drift.

"She would have nodded her head," I went on. "She might have said something in reply. At any rate, you would have broken the ice, and in a most polite and easy manner. It is the psychology of laughter that when two or more strangers are yelling their heads off they are no longer strangers. Do you understand?"

"Yes," said Joel, "and there may be something in it. She did have a friendly look while she was laughing."

"It's a cinch," I said enthusiastically.

"It *was* a cinch," Joel admitted, "but that was last Saturday. This is another Saturday."

"And the lady is attending a matinée to-day, also. Who knows but she may laugh again? At any rate, you're going to sit there and wait for her to laugh."

AFTER thinking it over, Mr. Winton agreed that here was a natural and genteel way of becoming acquainted with a young lady. There was nothing common or vulgar about it. We started for the theatre in high hope.

"Supposing this isn't a funny show?" Joel asked on the way down-town. "The chances are this show won't have one funny act, and then where are we?"

"We'll be right there in the fourth row," I retorted peevishly. "Why do you always look for rain? This is going to be a funny show. It says so in the paper."

I was wrong about that. It was as sad a vaudeville performance as I can remember. The funniest thing in it was a large, slow-moving woman who sang selections from grand opera that didn't seem grand to me, and while nobody laughed at her, a few morose souls went home.

Joel enjoyed himself intensely, because we hadn't been seated more than three minutes when the young lady drifted down the aisle and took her usual seat. There was no opportunity to try out our laughter attack. She did smile now and then, but without any great feeling. When the show ended, Joel came out of his trance, and we leaned against the box-office window and watched the lovely lady go away in her iron chariot.

"Let's find out where she lives," I suggested, thinking that if we knew that something else might occur to me, but Joel shook his head firmly.

"It would be the height of vulgarity," he stated. "No gentleman ever follows a lady."

"Possibly," I said, discouraged. "I know one that did, and he caught up with her, too. The next week she married him."

He refused to budge until she was out of sight. We then returned sadly to Hassayampa, where, by the way, nothing had been said to the family about what we were doing up in Phœnix. Boss Porter asked Joel about it, but I think Joel must have lied.

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III

AS THE days went by, Joel became a firm believer in my little scheme. He had faith in the theory that you can address a pleasant remark to a strange young woman if she is laughing heartily. And he further felt sure that this was one thing he had the courage to do. I never doubted the final result. Joel Winton is a high-class lad, and if he could once get acquainted with Miss Pearson, I saw all the signs of an approaching marriage.

We entered upon a mad career of Saturday matinées in Phœnix and I bore up under it very well. Some of the shows were good and some were what a stranger might expect to find in Phœnix. Promptly at two o'clock every Saturday we walked into the Olympic Theatre and sat down in seats two and three, and every Saturday the object of Joel's devotion came blithely in and took the end seat. She may have noticed Joel, but she showed no signs of it.

And while all these matinées were passable, they weren't what you could call violently funny. They seemed to get sadder and sadder as time wore on. Once or twice I thought the hilarity almost reached the desired point, but it never quite got there.

WE CONTINUED thus to commute between the Porter ranch and the Olympic Theatre, and it gradually dawned upon me that Joel's introduction to this peerless female depended a good deal upon the vaudeville team of Ross and Dunton. So did my ranch, along with my slightly used automobile.

Anybody else in this world but Joel would have managed to dig up an introduction to the lady some other way when our theatre scheme lagged, but he has a one-track mind, too. He had set up his mind about our plan and it stuck there.

As these shows came and went without making any one laugh heartily, I began to peer around for Ross and Dunton. I came to feel that my future was sort of wrapped up in them, and they had gone on out toward the Coast and were cheering up the people in San Francisco. It was rumored that they would start East soon.

"It's up to them," I said to Joel one Saturday, after a show that discouraged us. "Ross and Dunton did it before, and they can do it again."

"Where are they now?" he inquired.

"In San Francisco, and they're going to start East, but they may not stop in Phœnix."

"Would they stop if I offered sufficient financial inducements?" he asked thoughtfully.

"They looked like a couple of people who might do such a thing. I think if you sat down and wrote a check, something might be done."

It was. I talked to the manager of the Olympic Theatre and he took the check away from me while I was getting ready to hand it to him. We heard later that Ross and Dunton had considered the proposition and would be pleased to play a return engagement. Joel and I sat back and waited, and I spent the time drawing pleasing pictures of myself as the future would find me. I saw myself seated on the front stoop of the Ferguson ranch, with my automobile purring at my knee and several people to do what I told them. I meant to take a few of the boys away from Boss Porter and give them jobs, and I confidently expected to make Jake my foreman, because Jake uses the same kind of tobacco and can be relied upon. Then Ross and Dunton blew into Phœnix.

On that important Saturday, after waiting impatiently through the week, we arrived in Phœnix long before noon, and Joel hurried into the Capitol barber-shop to have himself made beautiful. While he was spending four dollars on his face, I wandered around town, looking for a new lunchroom, because our usual place had sold out and the new proprietor was apparently using mortar in his pies.

AT NOON I was hurrying down the main thoroughfare, when I turned a corner at high speed and collided with a citizen. It was an ordinary head-on collision, and the man's hat fell off into the ditch. He started to fall into the ditch himself, but I recovered my own balance and saved him. Then I rescued his hat and apologized, brushing him off carefully and assuring him that no harm was meant.

He was a man of about sixty and he accepted the accident good-naturedly and told me it was all right. At first I thought he might have broken something, because when a man gets to be sixty he bruises himself very easily.

"Sorry, mister," I told him. "I was thinking about something else."

"That's all right, young man," he answered cheerfully.

However, he looked a trifle dazed, so I invited him to step into the nearest drug-store and refresh himself.

"Have a lemonade," I suggested. "Sit down a minute and compose yourself."

"Thank you," he said, noticing that I was getting more polite all the time. A second later I had steered him into one of the drug-stores for which Phœnix is famous since they ran the saloons out. The bright-eyed young lady took our order and regaled us with a couple of drinks, and in no time at all the elderly gent had regained his poise.

"Live in Phœnix?" he asked.

"Me, no," I said. "I'm from Hassayampa. I work on a ranch. You don't look like an Arizona man yourself.

"I'm a stranger," he admitted. "I suppose you are one of these cattle-men."

"I have been," I grinned, "but my cow-chasing days are about ended. I'm pretty near through working for other people."

"That's good," he said. "I like to see young men have ambition. This country needs ambition."

"And rain."

We got along quite friendly over our lemon squash for two guys who had just knocked each other spinning, and finally he noticed that I seemed in good spirits and spoke of it.

"Why wouldn't I be?" I demanded. "This is one big day in my life. This is the day I've been waiting for a long time."

He expressed further interest.

"I'm going to be a regular ranch-owner," I assured him, and as he seemed really interested I warmed up and told him I intended to turn the Ferguson place into a model property.

"You're a lucky young man," he said, after I explained that this prosperity was all to be brought about that very afternoon and through my wealthy friend from Chicago. I likewise told him about the slightly used automobile, and from there I went on and presently he knew the whole business, including my own theory about laughter, and how I was trying to win a wife for a friend and a ranch for myself.

"All very interesting," he observed, "and amusing, too."

"Didn't you ever hear that joke about the Scotchman and the guineapig?" I asked.

"No," he said, "and I'm quite a theatre-goer. I never heard it."

"Listen," I said. "There was a Scotchman named Sandy, and he was walking through a wet field one Sunday morning—are you sure you never heard it?"

"Never," he repeated.

Then I told him the rest of it, and I will refrain from springing it here again, because it's old stuff now and has been done to death. He heard me out to the kick and then burst into peals of hearty merriment, as I knew he would, and as every one does who hears it for the first time.

"E-e-e-e-e!" he chuckled, catching his breath. "That is funny. That is indeed funny. E-e-e-e-e!"

He sat there on his drug-store stool and laughed about seven dollars' worth of vigorous laughter, repeating the end of the joke aloud, where the Scotchman says, "Neither did I." He got off his stool, wiped his eyes, put his hat on straight and shook me warmly by the hand. We walked outside and paused.

"Good luck to you and your ranch," he said in parting. "I sincerely hope your young friend may win his lady fair and reward you as he promised. That joke is the richest thing I've heard in years. You have made the day brighter. E-e-e-e-e!"

He started off, still chuckling, and I resumed my hunt for food.

YOUNG Mr. Winton and I arrived at our theatre promptly at the opening performance, sat down in two and three and waited in fear and trembling.

"Suppose," Joel remarked in his usual manner, "that she doesn't come to-day?"

"There's one thing I don't feel like supposing. She'll be here all right. Try and keep your hair on for the next five minutes and see."

Sure enough the lady appeared, took a brief glance at Joel and me and dropped into her seat in her fluttery manner.

The show moved along and while it was no great shakes as a show, I enjoyed it. Ross and Dunton were there and came on in the place of honor. The house was filled and all those Phœnix people began to howl, just as they had howled before. I could see Joel mentally getting ready to say something nice to the lady, though I told him that morning no courage would be required and that it was all very simple.

Little by little the audience grew helpless and we approached the moment of the joke about the Scotchman. I glanced at Joel. He was pale but determined and had moved forward on his seat. Then Ross walked across to Dunton and began to tell the joke.

A pussy-footed usher sneaked down the aisle, leaned over at the end of our row, held a short whispered consultation with Joel's heart-wrecker, and thereafter Miss Pearson reached for her hat and gloves, rose up behind the usher and turned away. And I hope to die if she didn't walk out of the theatre before Ross could tell Dunton the joke.

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I never even heard it myself. Neither did Joel P. Winton. When I ventured to look, he was still sitting on the extreme edge of his seat, primed, so to speak, but totally unexploded. Whatever he was going to say to that young lady remained within him and unsaid, and as I looked he gradually began to turn the color of old limburger cheese that has been out in the sun several days. There was a thunder of laughter and the shrieks of many innocent people enjoying themselves, but we were not among them. Wherever I looked, I could see nothing except the Ferguson ranch being sold to strangers.

"Let's get out," Joel said in a hoarse whisper.

I said nothing, but followed him, and a moment later we were standing in the dreary Arizona sunshine looking at each other like a couple of lost souls on the last day. There was nothing to be seen of the lady. She had vanished, along with my ranch and my slightly used automobile. Joel smiled in a sickly sort of way.

"Well, Andy," he said, "we slipped up on that one, didn't we? Now what'll we do?"

"Let's go down to the morgue," I said, "and see if we know anybody."

In more or less silence we drifted back to our garage, wondering why Miss Pearson had walked out on us at the psychological instant.

"Why couldn't she have waited ten minutes?" I demanded morosely.

"And what did that usher say to her?" Joel inquired. I didn't know the answer that day, but I did the next.

About ten o'clock Sunday morning I sat on the stoop behind the bunk-house trying to forget my woes and put an edge on a favorite razor. Joel had been very gloomy after leaving Phœnix. He came around the end of the building, carrying the morning paper.

"She's gone," he said, "and now I know why she left the theatre."

"Why?"

He stuck his finger at the first column and handed the paper to me, and this is what I read:

Mr. Alonzo Pearson, the Saginaw chair manufacturer, at a late hour last night was declared out of danger, and the Pearson family will start for Michigan this morning in their private car Cyclops. Mr. Pearson narrowly escaped death, according to the statement of Doctors Ruth and James, who attended him. Yesterday afternoon the manufacturer, who is elderly, encountered a humorous stranger on Hill Street near Finegan's drug-store. The stranger told Pearson a number of funny stories and one joke in particular, at which the wealthy old gentleman laughed most heartily.

He continued to laugh all the way home, and finally his merriment brought on an attack of hiccups, which gradually became more violent. He grew rapidly worse and our two best doctors were summoned, by which time the old gentleman was very weak and his life was despaired of. His alarmed wife and children gathered round his bedside. A messenger was sent post-haste to the Olympic Theatre, where Miss Doris Pearson was attending a matinée, and——

At this point, I ceased to read and began to look at a cloud of blue spots in the air.

"It must have been a mighty funny joke," Joel said sadly.

"It was," I admitted, unable to keep the horrible truth locked in my guilty bosom. "It was that one about the Scotchman and the guineapig."

Joel looked down at me in utter bewilderment.

"How do you know?" he asked.

"I told him," I said feebly. "I'm the humorous stranger he met on Hill Street."

"*You* told him," Joe yelled.

Then he began to laugh. If he had walloped me on the jaw, I would have felt better about it. He walked away, still laughing like a demented person, and when I saw him again he was hurling his belongings into the slightly used automobile with the tan slip-covers. That morning he departed from our ranch, saying good-by to nobody and not a word about the Ferguson ranch.

Since then I've been looking peaked.

"Andy," the boss said recently, "you ought to see a doctor."

"A doctor is no use," I replied sadly. "I need a surgeon."

"What for?" he asked, astonished.

"To cut out my luck," I said. "Lately my luck has been terrible."

And that's the way things stand.

November

By Theodosia Garrison

NOVEMBER is a spinster who never had a lover,
All her pretty sisters have sweethearts by the score,—
Wistful April, singing June with roses wreathed above her,
And the gipsy girl October flaming out from brake and cover;
But a gaunt, gray spinster is November evermore.

Brown earth beneath her feet, dull skies above her,
Not a flower anywhere nor any wings to start,
November is a spinster who never had a lover,
But when you see her sunsets you look into her heart.

I have loved her sisters, I have praised their graces,
But in grim November I find a better thing,—
A grief that asks no comforting, a heart that seeks no praises;—
I'd rather have her courage than all their pretty faces,
Her honest, blunt assurance than the promises of spring.

Brown earth beneath her feet, bare boughs above her,
Walking through the empty fields silent and apart,—
November is a spinster who never had a lover,
And only through her sunsets you look into her heart.

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The Deserter from the *Brutus*

A Story of Patriotism

By Max Vernon

AS WILKINS stepped over the edge of the *Brutus* on the coal-grimed government wharf at Pago-Pago, he changed suddenly from a rage-maddened tiger to a cautious and furtive weasel. He glanced, apparently casually, really most keenly, at the half-naked brown Tongan roustabouts, eating and smoking in little groups on the wharf. It was the noon-hour. And then he walked slowly and idly across the wooden floor and on around the end of the great coal-sheds.

As he walked he rolled a brown paper cigaret, pouring out with steady hand the cheap flake tobacco from its little cloth bag. He looked curiously at his firm hands as his fingers manipulated the tiny roll of paper, and wondered a bit at their capacity for this present trivial performance. For it had required both hands to hold, and both great hairy arms to lift above his head, the jagged mass of coal which he had just crashed down into the face of Second Engineer Bender.

As he passed the coal-sheds he did not turn to the right along the beach, where were ranged the native toadstool houses and the few scattered gleaming white government buildings that made up the little port village of Pago-Pago. Wilkins must needs forego the usual noonday pleasure of a brief social hour with the lazy, friendly, chattering, brown men and women of the beach. So, with final glances to right and left and behind, he buried himself at a plunge in a narrow tunnel-like path in the tropic bush.

For the aggressive velvet green jungle of the Tutuila mountains and hills comes down to the very skirts of Pago-Pago village, and would flow indeed quite over the flounces of these skirts were it not intermittently beaten back with ax and fire.

The bush path into which Wilkins had disappeared—and without the path he could not have penetrated the lush liana-bound jungle at all—was a special one recently hewn out by the sailors of the *Wheeling*, the trim white gunboat at the station.

It led from the government wharf and store-sheds up to the swift little hill which lifted directly above them, on the summit of which a tall white flagpole bore aloft all day the red-white-and-blue symbol of American sovereignty. Each morning a sailor climbed the path with the precious cloth under his arm, and with him a bugler, who blew triumphantly as the flag ran gracefully apeak, while all the sailors ashore or on the gunboat in the harbor, and all the government officers and clerks—all, indeed, there was of governing America in Pago-Pago—stood at rigid attention, faced to the little green hill.

And at sunset, the marvelous swift tropic sunset, the path was climbed again by sailor and bugler, and again the world stood still and at attention as the flag slowly fell and the bugle called its clear notes. This flag-raising and flag-falling were—what shall I say?—two patriotic hymns, two public Fourth of July orations, two "Home, Sweet Home" songs a day, in this distant, isolated speck of America, this emerald satellite of the mother planet, awash in the great, warm, blue, tropic Pacific.

Wilkins bore no flag as he trudged along the path. It was already up there above him, speaking out in staccato little pops and jerks its message of freedom and friendliness.

But Wilkins interpreted the flag's talking all wrong. To him it cried out harsh oaths and sneering jeers, and orders of days in brig on bread and water, and threats of irons and tricings-up. Wilkins had been taught to translate the flag language by Second Engineer Bender, and the grammar and vocabulary he had learned were equally atrocious. From Baltimore to Pago-Pago, round the Horn, is a long, long voyage, and more especially when one is a stoker in the oven-like depth of a heavy iron government collier like the *Brutus*. But most especially of all when the one man who is the flag and government to you, and slave-owner and overseer of you, all in one, is a brute.

At the top of the hill, under the monologing flag, Wilkins stopped for breath. It is curiously breath-taking and warm and perspiring work to climb a steep hill under the ardent tropic sun of Tutuila. And Wilkins, though clad only in sleeveless undershirt and thin overalls, and used to working mightily in a bake-oven, was not inured to the glaring light and the beating sun on his bare head. Also he had just been enraged enough to kill a man. And this, too, is heating.

SO WILKINS'S head was painfully hot, and at his temples and also low in the back of his brain, were heavy audible throbbings—much like the engine-throbbing of the *Brutus*. Perhaps if Bender were not yet dead he was feeling throbbings too. Everything seemed throbbing. Even the blinding noonday light came and went in telegraphic flashes. Wilkins realized that for a man trying to run for his life he was perilously near to fatal weakness. He leaned against the flagpole. He wrapped his arms about it. He closed his eyes to the dot-and-dash flashes of light.

The flag hanging over him in the listless wind cast down on him, though he didn't know it, an uncertain shade. Wilkins muttered, "God, let me be strong; let me get away. It was his fault; he treated me like a dog; the others were cowards; they are not Americans." Now this was not a prayer; it was simply Wilkins muttering semi-deliriously to himself.

But some way—perhaps it was the uncertain protecting shade of the great flag—the throb died down. Wilkins did not faint, but opened his eyes, and felt cooler, and stronger and saner.

It was a marvel of quieting peace-begetting beauty, this scene that Wilkins opened his eyes upon as he still clung to the supporting flagpole. From the right there came to him the low tones of the surf breaking unceasingly on the coral reef near the harbor mouth; and slowly turning that way, he saw the even, distance-softened curving white line that marked the outer margin of the fringing reef. Beyond stretched the utterly blue sheet of the Pacific, lifting its distance horizon-high up into a cloudless sky.

At the water's edge, all around the crater harbor below him, ran the narrow strip of gleaming beach, while back a few paces from it peeped out the scattered Samoan huts and rose the gently curving slender poles of coconut palms and the dense dark-green heads of the great-leaved breadfruit trees. And among them all, like slow ants, moved the natives, with naked, shining oiled shoulders and lava-lava clothed loins.

AND then Wilkins's bloodshot eyes roved out over the curious lake-like harbor, where rode the station gunboat like a great white-bodied albatross, tossing idly on the smooth swell. Not far from it rested the black bulk of the *Brutus*, tied up to the government wharf. It was here to vomit out its heap of coal so that this exquisite islet gem should be something practically useful for the gray ships of war that might come here some day bellowing for more fuel to feed their fires of rage.

And as Wilkins's eyes rested on the grimy collier, the growing peace and quiet in his breast disappeared. For with sudden vision that pierced the iron walls of the ship and penetrated deep into its dark hold, he saw the mangled red-and-white face of Bender, and his huddled form lying ugly on the tumbled coal. And with panic in his heart, Stoker Wilkins turned to the bush, frantic to flee.

As wildly as the driven rabbit dashes for the open, so wildly this panic-ridden man dashed for the close. He lunged against the odorous green wall in front of him. It gave—happy marvel. He plunged through; he stumbled along; he found always an invitation in a sort of scanter growth that seemed to follow a twisting line around the hillside. Wilkins had stumbled into a disused path, already reclaimed in part by the grasping jungle, but not yet wholly regained. His thin undershirt distributed itself in bits to the clutching branches; his hairy chest bled in slow drops from the raw places; his hair and beard caught strange hooked seeds, and his grimy overalls gaped wide at the many rents. All but naked he struggled along this gantlet line of scourging plant things, fighting for life. It

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He never got over his first turn to attention when the bugle called.

was the madness of panic, that madness that comes to the child in the dark or to men in burning buildings.

How long in rods or in time that panic flight lasted, Wilkins knew not. Was it a lifetime of mad fear and struggle, or was it but a few minutes or seconds of superhuman feeling and effort? How much of the possibilities of the human capacity to feel and strive may be exhausted in the drowning man's visions and clutchings, or the torture pains and gyrations of the gasping rogue at the end of the noose? How much, no credible witness has ever come back to tell us. But Wilkins came back. And yet he would not, perhaps could not, tell, as we talked together on a later day.

The end of Wilkins's death-struggle was life. He burst out of the torturing bush into a sun-lighted little clearing where an old man and a girl-child were digging up taro tubers. Or rather, when one looked a bit closer, Fa'uli was not a girl-child; she was a woman-child. Very young do the slender child-faced Samoan girls become women.

With the plunging advent of Wilkins, taro-gathering was for the moment perforce suspended. But beyond a first slight start, neither old man nor girl betrayed any considerable surprise at this unheralded fleshly manifestation. On Wilkins's part the utter peacefulness and quiet and seclusion of the scene acted like a fairy charm. Panting, bleeding, with bloodshot, wild eyes, cruelly torn hair and beard, and even more nearly mother-naked than the lava-lava clad natives themselves, he regained, almost in a breath, all his understanding and self-control. For, some way, the little glade, the quietness, the soft-eyed, friendly-gazing Fa'uli, and the placid, bent old man, spelled safety and peace to Wilkins. And when the girl came slowly up to him, calmly drawing her scanty covering together over shoulders and breasts, and said sweetly, "*Talofa!* Where you come?" he straightened up, unashamed and unafraid, responded, "*Talofa*," and simply pointed toward the harbor.

"Ah, you shippie man?"

"Yes, I was ship man but now no more."

"You serta?"

"Yes."

"Bad man he come?"

He slowly turned and looked toward the flapping flag and said, "Probably, yes."

"You my flen?"

"Yes."

SHE smiled softly and stretched out her slender brown arm toward him. He took her cool hand and she led him to the old man who stood leaning on his rough mattock. Him she talked to swiftly in a few liquid phrases, and then turning to Wilkins said: "We go home better before bad man he come."

The old man lifted his woven pandanus basket of taro tubers, and with a single tapering pencil-like cigarets. And englance at Wilkins and a simple "*Talofa*," veloping them all the soft languor of the shouldered his mattock and led the way to a narrow opening in the bush. Fa'uli and the deserter Wilkins followed, hand-in-hand.

Brown, sturdy, large-eyed, liquid-spoken, care-free, hospitable and loving were the "flens" and comforters, brothers and sisters and fathers and mothers, that the ecstatic Wilkins discovered in the little Samoan village nestling in the bush not two rifle shots from the coal-grimed *Brutus*. If there was a touch of calculating in the shaving and staining, the substitution of a lava-lava for remnants of shirt and overalls, if all the manipulating which made Wilkins something of a handsome man and a good deal of a Samoan, if it had a bit of thoughtfulness about it, it seemed more the result of the merry doing of "flens" and brothers to fool "bad shippie man he come" than to any calculating on the part of Wilkins.

From coal-heaving on the *Brutus* to perennial resting on a tropic isle! And with Fa'uli for 'flen." No village *taupo* was ever lovelier than Fa'uli; none ever with more rounded, gleaming shoulders, odorous with shining oil of copra. No happier, wholesomer, nor more hospitable family than hers, sitting day long a-squat on the sleeping-mats under the toadstool roof, the women weaving at fine mats, or pounding and staining the wood-pulp tapa clothes; the men earnestly watching them, or chatting together, as they smoked their long,

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changeless tropic day; gleaming about them the glowing light of the ardent tropic sun.

So, merged securely in the household of Fa'uli, Wilkins basked free and unmolested in the light of the tropic sun, and of the only less ardent eyes of his keen-witted, soft-spoken, little "flen." He lolled at pleasure on the sleeping-mats in the house; he went into the bush with the old man by hidden paths to collect a few coconuts or bread-fruits; he wrung an occasional chicken's neck; even, secure in his new brown oiled skin and shaven face, he helped the laughing men and women draw the great village seine in a sheltered cove at the harbor's end. As the time passed unnoted by, life for Wilkins was one long, warm drowsiness and daze of joy.

WE MAY not believe that the officers of the *Brutus* and the red-sashed *fita-fitas* of the commandant's body-guard did not search for Wilkins. On a little island, five by ten miles, most of it covered by impenetrable bush, it should not be difficult to find a roaming white man clad in tatters of shirt and overalls and crowned with a rough shock of yellow hair. But perhaps the apparent certainty of the quarry made the search less persistent and careful. Or perhaps the ingenuity and resources of the little "flen" Fa'uli overmatched the keenness of the hunters. As far as the seekers from the *Brutus* were concerned, Stoker Wilkins, deserter, was certainly unrecognizable as that child of nature, Fa'uli's "flen Williking," stalking carelessly about in a village not even out of sight of the flapping flag on the hill-top. And as for the *fita-fitas*, the native constabulary, were they not almost every man of them, brother, cousin, uncle or what-not to Fa'uli or some members of her toadstool-hut family?

It is in the nature of some men when such relief from work and stress comes as came to Wilkins, to drift into a settled incapacity for any future striving. Of such men is composed the human flotsam and jetsam strewn along the beach of every little sun-kissed coral inlet in the Pacific.

But there is another kind of man who gets rested sufficiently; who rests out, so to say, and is pricked by something in him toward lifting up life's burden again. Unfortunately for "flen Williking's" peace mind, he was of this latter sort of man. A steady course of sweet doing-nothing interrupted irregularly by monotonously similar repasts of coconut milk, roasted breadfruits and taro, cuttlefish arms and large white beetle-grubs, began, insidiously, to stir up in Wilkins's inside a certain *malaise*. There came, too, occasional twitchings in the great muscles of the arms and thighs that seemed to be complainings at their neglect.

And the few specimens of white children of nature inscrutably known as beach-combers, that Wilkins saw now and then in the village or elsewhere, were not pleasant companions, nor even cheerful sights to contemplate from little distances. One wreck in particular was an extremely unsettling sight to Wilkins. His eyelids moved unnecessarily and non-synchronously; there was a lack of teeth and a prematureness of grayness in the hair and wrinkles on the face that boded ill for the future.

But perhaps what most disturbed the peace of Wilkins's mind and soul was the morning and evening flag ceremony. Through the quiet distance he would hear the bugle faintly but clearly every morning and evening, and his eyes all unconsciously rarely missed the fluttering of the rising and falling flag. He never got over his first turn to attention that had been his wont when the bugle called. And some days he would stand absently gazing at the distant little green hill by the harbor's mouth, with the flag streaming out in the fresh trade-wind.

"Ah, bad shippie man where flag is," would murmur sympathetic little Fa'uli. And Wilkins would start and turn to her, and drop his heavy hands on her smooth shoulders and say, "Yes, bad men there." But his great arms would twitch and there would come to him a swift restiveness. He would recall the hoarse shouts and oaths of his working companions; and there would come the memory of the reluctant murmur of admiration his giant strength had wrung from the rough Titans about him.

He would suddenly reach out and roughly grasp and swing the half-frightened Fa'uli aloft, as if her plump little body were a feather's weight. And she feared these occasional moments in her "flen Williking!" Could he be going to become "bad head" like the old white man Anderson, who used to drink so much gin and stagger out of his trading-house ready to maim and kill? He had been carried away finally by the commandant's *fita-fitas*, howling wildly, and slavering horribly at the mouth. And she would shrink a little as Wilkins put her lightly on her feet, and would stroke his hand timidly until he turned his face and smiled at her again.

But if little Fa'uli had her misgivings and fears, what had she to make of complaint and protest? Into her care-free life had come this wonderful new thing, and, thankful and happy and proud, she accepted her gift from the gods. But this splendid gift would continue to belong to her, she knew, only as they willed it. Constant and ever-loving, hand in hand and by his side, Fa'uli clung to her flen. Trembling a little now and then with strange, half-realized emotions, but stoic in her happiness and in her possible woe alike.

She knew a little of the ways of the white man of the beach, and that little was not reassuring. But this great, strong, simple giant, mostly smiling, always gentle, was different from the men she had seen or the men of the tales told among the chattering villagers.

AND so drifted on the uncounted days. Always the glowing sun and the swift little showers from the tiny clouds; the murmuring and chatting and singing in the house; the laughing and loving about the evening cook-fire; the feasting and kava-drinkings; the strolls under the strange star patterns of the southern sky.

But one time there came a bad evening for Wilkins. A little party of white men, officers on a visiting British gunboat just arrived, came after supper to the village to see a *siva-siva*, or native sitting dance, arranged by the commandant as an entertainment for them. Wilkins, in passing near the group, heard but a single sentence before he turned sharply away at the sound of the English words. The sentence was: "Yes, the *Brutus* is going out in a couple of days; they almost finished unloading today." Just then the soft, distant bugling for the sunset flag-fall came. And as one of the British officers turned toward the falling flag on the little green hill, he stared surprisedly at a tall, unusual looking native momentarily who had come awkwardly to attention, with hand brought to bare head in salute.

"Did you see that curious chap there?" he asked a companion, as Wilkins pulled himself together quickly and walked swiftly away.

The next day at officers' mess on his boat, where the commander of the *Brutus* was dining on invitation, he told of the incident over the coffee. The impassive-faced commander was perhaps the only one at table who did not hazard a guess as to the unusual behavior of the native, but the next day he called on the commandant, and the captain of the *fita-fitas* received a special order.

When deserter Wilkins strode away with the single English-spoken sentence clamoring in his ears, he did not go to Fa'uli's house, but took a twisting path that led down through the bush to the water's edge at the upper end of the harbor. Here he clambered on a green lava rock and sat gripping at his knees, gazing straight down the crater harbor to where the mast-lights of the two gunboats and the *Brutus* sparkled like suspended fire-flies over the still water. And Wilkins thought and fought. He struggled with instinct and heredity and association and training. He struggled with loyalty to his new-found, trusting little companion. He fought for his life—for death awaited him there at the hands of his blood-kin, and soft, indolent, easeful, loveful life was here with his simple companions of the tropic bush. But he fought simply and unsophistically, with nature and nurture against him. He could sit no longer; he tramped the beach sands; he roamed the path-cut jungles; but ever deserter Wilkins, a man of no sophistry, fought his too complex fight.

FA'ULI waited long awake in the toadstool house. A few other times "Williking" had remained away in the bush or on the beach for a whole, soft, tropic night, and so Fa'uli was not too disturbed this time. Once, far in the night, her restless arms seemed to touch a body, and a swift kiss seemed to hover on her lips. But she drowsed on unawakened.

As the sun rose swiftly—a great golden ball fairly leaping from its sparkling couch on the eastern waters—the flag began its graceful ascent of the tall white pole on the little green hill, and the bugle called its first clear tones. But before the flag unfurled or the bugle song ended there came racing down the beach and up to the government wharf a strange-looking man, huge and hairy, mostly brown, torn by the thorn-teeth of the jungle. And as the flag blew out gloriously to the freshening breeze, and the lilting echoes of the bugle came dying home, Wilkins halted and drew himself up awkwardly, but rigidly, to attention, face to the little green hill.

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When I saw her again, she was surrounded by a phalanx of newspaper men who had come to interview and remained to adore.

I'll Show You the Town

By Elmer Davis

III

WHAT'S HAPPENED

MY SERIOUS plan to devote the summer vacation to a book on Apartment House Life in Ancient Rome, which will secure me a full professorship in the Latin Department, is broken into by a number of annoying circumstances.

I am invited to address a convention of a Society for the Segregation of the Socially Inefficient at a fashionable summer hotel. This would afford a not unpleasant week-end were it not that the president of my home college, which my father headed before him, comes to town in distress and begs me to keep a protective eye on a certain lady, wealthy widow of an old benefactor of the college, who is going to the convention and whose person or money, of such possible usefulness to my *alma mater*, might fall victim to some unscrupulous fortune-hunter among the uplifters at the convention.

At the same time—and in accord with the same unfortunate reputation which I suffer of being a safe chaperon for girls or women, young or old, whose friends or husbands are too busy to bother with them—Cousin Edith hands over to me, to be entertained, a young million-heiress from the West, unused to the ways of the city. I meet Mrs. Clevenger, the widow, and Hazel Deming, the heiress, and do my best to show them both the town.

Mrs. Clevenger, it appears, needs a great deal of showing, and Hazel a little restraint. The latter, just arrived, promptly gets into the papers by knocking out a masher on Broadway, and while we are later walking on Fifth Avenue, and I attempting to dissuade her from applying such violent Western methods to the slight emergencies of the peaceful life in the East, we are both blown into a subway excavation.

This isn't bad, though it rather spoils my point. But it makes Hazel and me quite friendly. She suggests, when I ask advice, that "Grapefruit, Coffee and Rolls" would be a harmless show to take Mrs. Clevenger to; and she further proposes to come to the conference to hear me. I do take Mrs. Clevenger. Instead of shocking it makes her a bit thirsty. She swallows the Zanzibar café after the play without a gasp, but I see that she swallows no drinks. I steer her into an open carriage when she desires to drive in the Park afterward, but it becomes a rather warm evening and I am saved only by a thunderstorm. At the conference, where it looks dull, I get two friends to promise to guard her from Gushmore when she arrives, and return to town and Hazel. Hazel is interested in fast cars, and, I discover, in close dancing. Her chaperon, old Sarah, isn't in either. Anyway, she's a great girl, and I'm getting down at my book with difficulty on Sunday when a letter from my old college love, Lucile, says she's leaving her husband and coming to town, and to me.

CHAPTER NINE (*Continued*)

NOW of course the picture of Lucile that was locked away in some storeroom of my heart—the picture that I'd taken out and dusted off so frequently in the last few days—was a picture of Lucile as she had looked back in college—a girl in a Merry Widow hat and a sheath gown, or something like that. So, though I saw her as soon as she appeared in the doorway opening off the train platform, with two or three porters in her wake, I didn't recognize her till she was within arm's length. Her black hair was bobbed, and curling around her ears; she wore a vivacious tailored suit with a very short skirt and very high shoes; she had the modern streamline figure; the porter just behind her was leading two fluffy, turbulent little dogs, and what appeared to be the third of the trio was draped about her neck. She was quite a spectacle, but she wasn't the girl I'd been waiting for.

However, that was immaterial. When she saw me she smiled all over her face, and ran forward with hands outstretched.

"Oh, there you are! I'm so glad to see you——"

I kissed her, or she kissed me; I don't know which of us started it, but it had happened two or three times before she unwrapped her arms from around my neck and turned to the porter.

"There, man! Untangle their chains, for goodness' sake— No, this way. There. Aren't they loves, Alec? Zep and Ubby I call them, because the man that

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gave them to me was so dreadfully pro-German. Poor thing, I suppose he's still in jail. Now where's the man with my bags? Oh, yes; there you are. Well! Oh, Alec, I've got so much to tell you, and I'm so glad to see you. Where are we going?"

"You usually stay at the Ritz, don't you?"

"When I came here with Frank. But, you see, when I ran away from him I—I didn't dare to tell him outright; he has such a terrible temper. So I slipped away while he was at the office, and left him a note. And I didn't tell him where I was going; I don't mind if he knows where I am after I get settled, but not at first. So I don't want to go to the Ritz, because he knows I can run a bill there, and that's one of the first places he'd look."

"Then you'd better check your baggage and doggage," I suggested, "and we'll have lunch somewhere and talk it over."

"Zep and Uby will have to have some lunch, too. You poor, sweet little things, you're almost starved to death, aren't you? Never mind—Lucile will look out for you."

"What do they eat?" I asked with some disfavor. "If they have to catch it themselves, I suppose it's cockroaches and goldfish."

"Cockroaches and goldfish, indeed! Humph! When they're at home they live on club-sandwiches, don't you, sweetings? But I suppose we can't take them—Give them to a porter , and tell him to give them some sweetbreads, or a meat-loaf. All right; that's settled. My! It's so good to be with you——"

The porter took the abominable creatures away, and Lucile caught my arm with a gleeful little skip as we set out through the underground passage to the Biltmore. And it wasn't till the lunch had been ordered, and she'd disposed of her gloves and furs, and was leaning forward with her elbows on the table and her chin in her hands, and a contented little smile playing about her lips, that I was able to ask her about it.

"WELL, you see," she explained, "I think it all began with Frank's inability to sympathize with my need for self-expression. I have a personality that demands its life; I didn't want to be just an appendix to Frank. And that was what he insisted I must be. We kept clashing over little things for a long time before I realized that the root of the thing was simply that we were incompatible—mismated; our egos clashed. Yes, mismated. I was a headstrong, foolish little thing when I married him, wasn't I, Alec? You dear! You know I was, but you're too chivalrous——

"So that was how it began. I felt that I ought to be economically independent, but Frank wouldn't hear of it. Whenever I asked him for money he gave me twice as much as I asked for, but I had to ask him for every cent. No woman likes that. So gradually I came to realize that I wasn't his wife at all—only his housekeeper and his—his mistress, if you understand what I mean."

"What did you want to do?" I interrupted.

"I have a great deal of artistic talent. I'm really a rather unusually good dancer—remember, Alec, those gorgeous waltzes we used to have in the old gym?—and I shouldn't have minded going out with a boy I knew rather well as a kind of society team, you know? But Frank was perfectly furious when I suggested it. I—I have a very remarkable personality, I've discovered; it has the most amazing influence on people with artistic and musical tastes. I tried to create a kind of a salon that would serve as a clearing-house for the ideas of the really creative artistic personalities of Chicago, but Frank wasn't nice about that, either. He used to say he didn't mind feeding all the poets and painters in town if I'd have them stand in a bread-line at the kitchen door, but that he'd be damned if he liked to see them around the front of the house. Now what can you do with a man like that?

"So finally I felt that it was unendurable; that I couldn't go on living with him and be true to my highest self. I might have stood it, perhaps, but—but—I couldn't tell this to anybody but you, Alec——

"A MAN came into my life who was everything that Frank wasn't. He understood me; and he was such a perfect Bayard, Alec! The soul of honor. I was mad enough to have fled with him; I w-wanted to, so much. You'll think I'm wicked, I know, but haven't I a right to happiness? I'd have given up everything for him—I'd have flung my—my good name in the gutter, for the world to trample on. But I couldn't, for his sake. He's dreadfully brilliant, and he's going to have a wonderful career. I came at last to realize that even though he was begging me to fly with him, a woman who truly loved him wouldn't have ruined him by—by doing something that was sure to get into the papers. Besides, my husband is terribly vindictive; he might have killed him. So he went away—went out of my life—perhaps forever. Do you think I'm a bad woman, Alec?"

"I think you're wonderful," I said recklessly. She laid her hand on mine.

"You're a dear.... Of course, I couldn't go on living with Frank after that. It would have been sacrilegious, wouldn't it? And then we had a quarrel—over money—and he grabbed my shoulders and shook me. He'd never been brutal to me before. So I made up my mind then and there to leave him, to come to New York, to live my own life. And I thought of you, and how dear and dependable you are, and I knew you'd do anything——"

"Of course I will," I told her. "And the man? Where did he go?"

She looked at me with wet, starry eyes.

"I don't know. Somewhere out into this big, cold world."

"Maybe he'll turn up," I said encouragingly, "when he hears that you've——"

"Oh, no—no. Not now. I don't want to see him yet. I have my own way to make in the world; I shall never be a burden on the man I love. The thing for me to do is to build up a new life for myself and by myself, with his memory as an inspiration. Perhaps it will never be anything more; perhaps we shall never meet again; but memories are everything to a woman. Besides, I haven't got my divorce yet; and I suppose I have to desert Frank quite a while before I can sue him, don't I?"

"What do you intend to do?" I asked. "New York is rather overstocked with dancing teams——"

"I was afraid so. Besides, the boy I was thinking of as a partner is married now—married to a perfectly impossible girl—and that all fell through. But I thought I might sell perfumes, or cigarets—anything where taste and personality counts for more than experience. I'll have money enough to set up a little shop. Or I might be an expert shopper for women who live out of town—I know a girl who makes a good living doing that. And I know I could write movie-scenarios. What do you think?"

"We can take our time about it," I said as the salad arrived. "But you can count on me for anything in the world." For really she was an appealing figure as she sat there with her fingers working nervously, her eyes moist, her face lined with worry, but exalted by the enthusiasm of breaking away from a killing routine at home and coming to the big town to look for the pot of gold. It was almost like old times to be with her.

"You're a dear," said Lucile. "And this is awfully good salad."

"Where do we go from here?" I asked over the coffee.

"Well, first of all I have to find a place to stay, don't I? And I'm in such a silly predicament. You see, I didn't have very much money when I left, and I didn't want to make Frank suspicious by asking for more just after he'd shaken me. I packed up my jewels and gave them to my maid—oh, she's the most faithful creature in the world; they're safe enough —and told her to sell them as soon as she could and mail me a money order. By the middle of the week I ought to have fifteen or twenty thousand dollars; but just now— After I'd paid for my ticket and my meals on the train, and tipped the porters——"

SHE turned her purse upside-down on the tablecloth and counted up the pile of change.

"Four eighty-five. I couldn't ask this of any other man in the world, Alec, but I know you won't misunderstand. Can you lend me some money till I hear from Celestine?"

"Of course," I began; then I reached into my pocket rather dubiously and drew out the contents. There was something more than twelve dollars, but on my plate was the bill for the luncheon; nine dollars and forty cents.

"I could run a bill at the Ritz, of course," she said. "But then Frank would find me right away. If you can let me have fifty or a hundred I'll go to some cheap place till I hear from the jewels."

"You can't do it to-day," I said ruefully. "I'm broke. By the time I've tipped the waiter I'll have less than two dollars. And it's Sunday, so I can't go to the bank. To-morrow——"

Of course, she could go to any hotel and run a bill on the strength of her two suitcases. But she was going to need all of her money, even if Celestine didn't disappear with the jewels; and somehow I had little faith in Celestine. Lucile ought to be economical. And there were no longer any cheap hotels.

"I could ask my cousin, Mrs. Torrey, to put you up for a day or two——"

"Oh, that would be fine!"

"But she's out of town for the week-end. But—here!" A helpful idea broke in on me. I might not have welcomed it so readily

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"It's so terribly hot," she apologized. "And I thought that so long as I wasn't going anywhere I might as well be comfortable. Do you think it's all right?"

if Lucile hadn't been gazing at me trustfully with a look of you-wonderful-person-I'd-be-absolutely-stumped-but-I-know-you'll-think-of something. "I'm supposed to be out of town just now. I'm attending a convention up in Westchester. It was pure luck that I happened to come in and get your letter. And I ought to go back to-night. So why don't you take my apartment for a few days, till your money comes? I'll be out of town all week; I'll have no need of the place; it's a convenient size, three rooms and kitchenette; and it wouldn't cost anything but any food you might buy. Then you could save all your funds for emergencies."

It had also crossed my mind that she could save my funds. She'd never been very economical, even when she was poor; and those years of ease with Pemberton had undoubtedly made her less so. With no better chance of immediate repayment, I didn't like to think of her killing off my little bank-account at the Plaza or the St. Regis.

"I'd love it!" she cried softly. "So much nicer than a hotel; and Frank would never think of looking for me there. And by the time you come back from your convention I'd have found a place. But would it be all right?"

"All right?"

"Wouldn't people talk? They would in Chicago, but I suppose in New York nobody ever thinks anything about——"

"My dear Lucile, the reason nobody ever thinks in New York is that nobody ever knows. Nobody in an apartment-house pays any attention to anybody else, unless they play the piano at three o'clock in the morning. I'll be out of town; you'll be there. That's all. If any of my friends call up, tell them you're subletting my apartment. Besides, around the university everybody sublets apartments during summer-school; there's nothing out of the way about it."

"It sounds attractive," she said. "But I'll tell you what will be safer. If you're going away to-night, I'll stay there, and then you can get me some money

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to-morrow and I'll hunt a hotel. Will that do?"

It seemed to be the best arrangement. I'd take a train to Maplecrest to-night; and to-morrow Hershfield or somebody would cash a check and I'd send her the money.

AT THAT moment I was thoroughly happy. There was really a great deal of romance about it—Lucile coming to me when the rest of the world had turned black, and my helping her to a fresh start. Like most young college professors, I had a secret yearning to be a romantic, worldly, heroic person and like most young college professors, I had been intended by Providence for something entirely different—to wit, for a college professor. But if I couldn't be the hero, there was a good deal of satisfaction in being the loyal, adoring friend through whom the beautiful heroine found ultimate happiness. There was a delightful unconventionality about giving my apartment to Lucile—an unconventionality that nobody would misunderstand, because nobody would have the chance.

As I paid the lunch check and set out to recover those wretched dogs I was already picturing a future when Lucile would be a wealthy costumer, or something of the sort; and I— Well, if I were not in the spotlight at the final curtain—and that was not at all impossible—at least I'd be close at hand; I might hunt up the man she loved and bring two fond hearts together.

It wasn't until we were getting into the taxi that I remembered that Hazel was going to call for me in the morning. That would have to be headed off. But I could call her up and make some sort of excuse before I went up to Maplecrest to-night; for a moment, unwilling to miss that motor trip in the morning, I thought of going to a hotel in town; but I wouldn't have money enough to stay at a hotel. I'd have to go back to the conference. Indeed, if I paid for this taxi I couldn't even buy a railroad ticket back to Maplecrest. It was embarassing to have to explain this to the woman who was depending on me; but Lucile was a sport about it. She'd made her great decision, and was still carried along by the adventurous thrill of the enterprise. We made quite a delightful bit of by-play out of the comradely necessity that she should pay for the cab.

The first real test of my dependability came when we disembarked in front of my apartment house and proceeded haughtily into the lobby, in the presence of a telephone girl and two negro hallboys. They all knew me as a studious bachelor of unstained rectitude; and now they saw me coming home with two big suitcases, two fluffy little dogs, and a girl who as an importation into one's apartment was pretty enough to arouse suspicion anywhere. It takes a good deal to disturb the bored superiority of a Jamaican hallboy, but James and Walter were obviously upset; and the telephone girl dropped her magazine section of the Sunday paper, and peered out from her emplacement behind the switchboard with an air of well-I'd-never-have-thought-it-of-him-but-men-are-all-alike.

"Sadie," I said severely, "this is Mrs. Pemberton, who has sublet my apartment. Hold my mail; I'll write to you in a day or so and tell you where to send it. James, take the suitcases. Walter, Mrs. Pemberton's dogs. Look after them in the basement; she'll tell you what to feed them."

Apparently we put it over. Sadie subsided behind her desk, and the boys took up the burden of Lucile's property with the injured air that was evoked by every attempt to make them do any work. I handed my keys to Lucile as she got into the elevator.

"Don't be so formal," she said, and the stage whisper in which she said it spoiled a good deal of my carefully contrived effect. "You'll have to come up and show me where everything is and how everything works, won't you?"

"Of course I'm coming up. But I want to telephone first."

The door clanged behind her, and the elevator rose slowly out of my sight. Then I asked Sadie to call the Plaza.

But Miss Deming, I learned, was not in. Was there any message?

"Not now," I said. "I'll call her later."

I didn't want to run the risk that she might call my apartment and be answered by Lucile. For I remembered that in the old days at Wyndham we had had an amazing talent for getting caught.

CHAPTER TEN
Oh, Oh, Lucile!

LUCILE hadn't had possession of the apartment for more than five minutes when I came in; but in those five minutes she had done things. Her coat and hat were flung carelessly across the couch, and Lucile, with her fluffy hair disordered by the wind that was sweeping through the wide-flung windows, was dusting off the furniture and arranging in neat stacks the masses of books and periodicals on the table. Her photograph in the silver frame, however, still held the place of honor.

"You were a dear to keep that," she said. "I remember the day you took it—down at McAllister's Grove. Wasn't it fun to be alive then? And doesn't my hair look queer now? But it was sweet of you to keep it always with you. Poor boy—I suppose I gave you a pretty bad time, didn't I?" And she stopped, with the dust-rag in her hand, and looked me over with a sympathy that was refreshing enough to compensate for all my worries.

"Well!" she remarked presently, after our eyes had met and clung and turned away. "The apartment is a darling; but such a scandalous, disorderly mess as your table I've never seen. It may be all right for a professor, but no woman would stand it. You don't mind my straightening things up a little, do you?"

For the sake of appearances I should probably have gone away at once. But it was rather pleasant to see a pretty girl flitting about my monastic little cliff dwelling, even if she was reducing it to inconvenient respectability and making it impossible for me to lay my hands on my pet books. Besides, Lucile and I had so many things to talk about that I couldn't go away just yet. So I kept out of the way while she went rapidly over all three rooms, after which she scuttled into the bedroom, did something to her hair, and presently reappeared with a rather pathetic air of weariness.

"I think I've earned one of those cigarets," she said. "This is the first housecleaning I've done in years, except at camp; and even there Frank always wants to have three or four servants around. My, these are good! Remember when you gave me my first cigaret, Alec?—the very day you took that snapshot, I do believe! The day you and I and Doris and Steve went down to the grove, and we girls sat up on a rail fence and tried to smoke, and how sick it made us! Funny, isn't it? I never supposed then that I'd marry a rich man, and—and find my life wrecked, after I'd spent years in the hardest kind of trying to make the best of him. Nobody will ever know, Alec, what those years have been. How lucky we can't see what's coming, isn't it?

"And you've changed, too. Oh, I don't mean your real self; your heart's in the same place, I know. But all these books, and things—of course we all knew you were going to be a teacher, but somehow I never thought you'd know so much. Do you remember——"

I suppose when any two classmates who were together almost all the time in college and haven't had a real talk in seven years since, meet again after a long separation, they're likely to take up a good deal of time running over the things they did back in the past. And even if those two were once engaged to be married, they can find plenty of reminiscences to keep them away from ground that might be dangerous. When I finally looked at my watch it was ten minutes to six.

"Good Heavens! I ought to be going. My train leaves at eight-twenty, and we ought to go out somewhere and get dinner first."

I stopped in consternation as I remembered that I had something like twenty-five cents over and above the price of a ticket to Maplecrest. Lucile had paid for the taxi; she wouldn't have more than a couple of dollars, and it wouldn't do to take her last cent.

"Oh, let's don't go out," she protested. "It's so hot. Besides, we haven't the price of a decent meal between us. I can still cook, Alec. Let's have a sort of little supper just by ourselves, up here. Wouldn't you like to?"

"There isn't any food."

"Plenty of it in the delicatessens," said Lucile. "We could have some cold ham and salad; and I could make coffee, and bake some nice hot biscuit——"

THAT settled it. My mouth watered as I remembered the biscuit Lucile used to bake for our picnic parties back in college—biscuit such as I had never tasted since. So she wrote out a list of what she wanted and I set out to a delicatessen where I had credit.

Ours is a domestic neighborhood. It's full of teachers and graduate students, their wives and offspring. I'd seen the regular evening pilgrimage of married persons to the delicatessen stores that decorated the street floor of almost every apartment house—seen it a thousand times, but I'd never taken part in it before, and when I stood in the midst of my respectable, married neighbors, and ordered flour and baking-powder and coffee and pimento cheese, I felt as guilty as if the rice were rolling off my hat.

By the time I'd bought everything on the list, my arms were full of bundles, and

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a bottle of olives protruded from a side pocket of my coat. And just as I was coming out of the delicatessen, burdened with the provender for an unsuspected household, I had the bad luck to run into old McCabe. He was carrying a brown parcel that looked as if it might be roast beef, and a paper bucket full of ice-cream, and he came near dropping them both when he saw me.

"Why, Deupree, this is luck! Somebody told me you were out of town for a week or so."

"I am taking a little holiday before getting to work," I said; "but I had to come back for the day."

"By George, I'm glad you did. You know, I think the common interpretation of that passage in Vitruvius we were speaking of—the one about the roofs, you remember—is altogether wrong. I'll just run up to your apartment and go over it with you——"

I almost dropped a chocolate layer-cake. McCabe was no unworldly person; he knew the times he lived in, and the people who lived in them. If he had found an aged and ugly woman in my apartment he might have swallowed the story that I was subletting it; but Lucile——

"Why, the fact is, doctor," I stammered, "I'm—I'm having a sort of party this evening. Just a few friends, and so on; everything's upset—don't know that I could find my Vitruvius without hunting for an hour——"

"I could explain it in five minutes," he persisted, "and we'd better get the point argued out so you can think it over this week."

"I already have too much to think over this week," I said, walking away from him. "I'll call you up when I come back."

I DIDN'T dare to look back to see if he were offended; probably he was, but I couldn't help it; and the incident gave me such a guilty feeling that when I came into the lobby and found none of the servants in sight I didn't have the courage to ring for the elevator. They'd seen me go away ostentatiously a few minutes ago, and there was no point in arousing suspicion by letting them see me come back loaded with all the ammunition for a party.

I'd meant to call Hazel from a booth, while I was out, but I'd forgotten it. I didn't want to call her from the apartment and have to explain to Lucile; but I thought I'd better not call anybody back to the switchboard now. If I could get away unseen, so much the better. So I tiptoed to the stairway and walked up ten flights. It was a good deal of a sacrifice, even to protect the fair name of a lady. But when I finally arrived, out of breath, I found that Lucile, too, had been busy.

"It's so terribly hot," she apologized. "And I thought that so long as I wasn't going anywhere I might as well be comfortable. Do you think it's all right?"

Any man would have thought it was all right. She'd changed into something of canary silk that might have been a negligée, but looked more like a kimono, and foolish little yellow slippers with fluffy pompons. I'd have been willing to climb ten flights of stairs with a double armload of food every night if a vision like that waited for me; but it was well that I had side-tracked McCabe.

When it was all gone but the coffee and cigarets I pulled my Morris chair up to the window, and Lucile piled two or three cushions on its wide arm and perched herself beside my shoulder. The new moon and the evening star burned steadily through the dying afterglow; now and then a beam of glaring whiteness, thrown from a searchlight on one of the battle-ships in the river, swept across the upper floors of the rampart of apartment-houses. Strolling groups in summer clothing made blotches of white on the gray, lamp-lined avenue below; across the airshaft somebody drew two or three rippling chords from a piano.

"THIS has been the first really happy day I've known in weeks," said Lucile softly. "Funny, isn't it, when all my future is so uncertain? But I suppose that's the only way to really enjoy life—living just from day to day."

"Day to day is all right," I muttered absently. "But living from minute to minute is rather wearing." For I was beginning to worry again about Hazel; I'd have to ger her on the phone before I left.

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," said Lucile suddenly. "You had a phone call while you were out. A Mrs. Clevenger."

"Mrs. Clevenger? What did you tell her?"

"Just what you told me to—that you were at a convention up in Westchester, and that I'd sublet your apartment—Why, Alec! What have I done?"

"Nothing," I groaned. "That is, nothing that was your fault. Only, if anybody else calls up, pretend to be the switchboard girl, and tell them that Mr. Deupree's apartment doesn't answer."

"What's the matter?" she demanded. "Who is Mrs. Clevenger?"

"Don't you remember? The memorial chapel, and——"

"Oh, that woman! What in the world is she calling you for?"

"It isn't what she's calling me for—it's where she's calling me from. She's at the conference, and she undoubtedly wondered why I wasn't?"

"Oh, damn!" said Lucile. "I *am* a little fool, Alec."

"But, my dear, you couldn't help it." And I thought I'd better tell her about Agnes, and why I was supposed to stay close to her side. Lucile understood; she knew that Wyndham was always short of money; she realized what a women's dormitory, and a memorial gateway, and a quarter of a million on the endowment fund would mean. She didn't know, of course, that Agnes's appearance had changed, and I saw no reason for telling her. It seemed to me there was no need to let her know that I was going to spend the next week in the company of a woman better looking and better dressed than herself.

"Well, I hope I haven't done any harm," she sighed. "But you're clever; you can get out of it some way. And it's too bad you have to waste so much time with that awful frump. Tell me, Alec—I haven't any right to ask you this, but I'm going to ask you, anyway. Are you—are you in love with anybody?"

If I had been on the witness stand, I should certainly have waited for somebody to object to that question. For I supposed that I wasn't, but I didn't want to commit myself, with the awful possibilities of this week ahead of me. However, there was no one to object to the question, and it had to be yes or no.

"No," I said.

"Have you been, since we left college? But of course you have!"

"As it happens, I haven't. It seems that nobody ever thinks of me in that way."

"I wondered," she said. "I wondered. Somehow I felt that you'd always be loyal to your ideals. You're that way, Alec. You know, I've always loved you—not like—like the man I told you about, of course. But it's no wonder I misunderstood it when I first began to like you a great deal, back in college. Remember how we planned our lives together? And then everything seemed to end; and now after so many years we're together again, only in such a different way. Oh, well, life's a strange thing, isn't it?"

"So I have been told."

"You're the only man in the world," she mused, "with whom I could spend an evening like this without feeling that I was doing something just a bit—indiscreet. Not many men could be trusted like this, Alec. But you make everything seem so safe, somehow."

"You didn't always think that," I said angrily, losing my temper along with the recollection of things that should not be said.

"We were always getting caught, weren't we?" she laughed. "Oh, listen! Remember?"

The lady across the airshaft was playing the barcarole from the "Tales of Hoffman." It had been a favorite of ours in college, and Lucile began to sing softly:

"Belle nuit, ô nuit d'amour,
Souris à nos ivresses;
Nuit plus tendre que le jour,
O belle nuit d'amour—"

Somehow, this shattered the wistful charm of the evening for me. I'd rather outgrown such heavy sentiment in seven years, and I should have supposed that Lucile had outgrown it too.

Or, if she had outgrown it, and was merely thinking back—I began to feel a little uneasy at her thinking back in that particular way. What about this man she was in love with? It was all right to laugh a little and cry a little over the dead past, and strew flowers on the grave, but to attempt a resurrection was another matter. Not that I objected seriously to a resurrection; but I didn't want to think about it just now. Before I got around to resurrections I had to think up some explanation for Agnes; I had to get Hazel on the phone, not to mention a large and vindictive husband that Lucile would have to get rid of—And my tea! Good God! I'd forgotten all about those people who were coming here to tea on Tuesday. Lucile would have to get out before then.

SOME of the strollers in the street below had heard her and stopped to listen. It was a long way down, and the apartment was dark; but I wondered how much they could see. For there were many people in the neighborhood who knew me; and if a scholarly young bachelor is seen sitting shamelessly in the window of his apartment, on Sunday evening, with a beautiful young woman in a yellow kimono perched

(Continued on page 78)

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The Colyumists' Confessional

XI. Jay E. House, *by Himself*

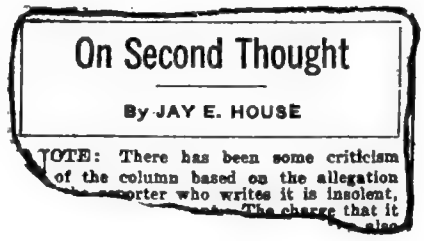
IT WAS in August, 1901, that the daring and intrepid publisher of a morning newspaper printed in the capital city of a middle-western state gave me an indefinite and indeterminate commision and turned me loose upon his readers. Late the same afternoon I dumped three or four pages of typewritten dynamite on the managing editor's desk. The M. E. wrote a head over it and sent it up-stairs. I've been "doing" a column ever since. During a good deal of that time my regular daily performance has been complicated with various and sundry other adventures, both inside and outside the office of a newspaper. In the years that have come and gone I have doubled as editor, managing editor, political reporter, sporting-writer, dramatic and musical critic, and as a public official. But for more than eighteen years my pay check has hinged on the assumption, justified or unwarranted, that I am a columnist by trade.

In our initial interview the publisher in question told me he wanted the paper "livened up." I proceeded on that hypothesis. I think there is no manner of doubt I delivered what was ordered. During the first year or two indignant subscribers and outraged citizens ran my employer ragged. I made all kinds of trouble for the paper. I could, in one biting paragraph, drive away a greater number of subscribers and a larger amount of advertising than the ordinary solicitor could deliver in a month. Not only that; I frequently did so. Upon one occasion I got myself constructively in jail for a period of fourteen months. But I doubt now that I did either the paper or myself any permanent harm. At any rate, my former employer now is a United States Senator, and has been "mentioned" for President, and I am writing a column on the "big time."

The thing I wish to avoid in writing these few lines is the appearance of the oracular or the dogmatic. I am what is vernacularly known as a "busher." My lifes as a columnist, if that particular phraseological indiscretion is to be permitted, has been spent in the minor leagues. I did not "make" the majors until late last spring. I do not know, even yet, whether I am of big-league caliber. If the scouts ever looked me over, they passed me up.

To me this palpable omission has been a matter neither of disappointment nor regret. No headliner ever had more fun than I have had on the "small-time" circuit. The ultimate result of my venture in column-conducting in a one-night stand was my election to public office. It must have been that. I had no particular qualifications for public life. I did not pretend to be for the workingman. I was not deeply concerned for the public weal. It was charged, and tacitly admitted, that I was not so rigorous in my attitude toward certain of the moral precepts as was becoming to a gentleman who sought the support of his fellow citizens at the polls. They made an excellent case against me. But two classes of citizens joined together and put me over. They were those who liked my column and those who, regarding it as a public menace, believed I would have no time to write it were I elected to office. I have no way of knowing which of these two elements cast the larger vote, but I won two vicious battles with comparative ease.

Jay E. House, of the Philadelphia Public Ledger.



On Second Thought

By JAY E. HOUSE

NOTE: There has been some criticism of the column based on the allegation [illegible] reporter who writes it is insolent, [illegible] The charge that it also

AS A column-conductor I have learned a number of things. One of them is that a writing man who reaches for his effects seldom is able to lay hand upon them. No man can be humorous, pathetic or convincing to order. Those who strain themselves in an effort to produce the soporific punch, seldom elicit the merry "har har," or induce the sweetly saccharine tear. I used to try to write a wallop into every paragraph. I quit that long ago, because I learned the futility of such endeavor. I am satisfied now if I score a knockout once a month. That's a good average. Years ago, working as a reporter, I learned if there were humor or pathos in a new event it would indelibly stamp itself on the story of that event. So, all I try to do is to project common sense in clear and simple fashion. If his point stands up in the clear light of reason, a column-conductor less frequently awakes from his sleep to blush for the indiscretions of the day's work.

I think the "knack" in writing a column is that of avoiding a set formula. No matter how good it is, a set line of stuff grows tiresome to the reader. Like nearly every other columnist, I have a bag of tricks to which I am occasionally able to add a new feature. Once a week, or oftener, I vary the monotonous occupation of passing comment upon people and their affairs by springing upon the readers of the paper from an unexpected angle, or by introducing a different form of phraseological banter. I write whatever my mood dictates. If I feel competent seriously to pass upon a question of public interest, I shoot my innermost thoughts at that particular mark. I used to swing a hammer; now I wear rubber heels. I used to try to drive my point home by main force. I have found that it is more effective to slip it across.

OF ALL the poor tools which repose in my work-chest, I lean heaviest, perhaps, upon what is known as the human-interest paragraph. I have another name for it, preferring to characterize the exercise to which I have alluded as projecting the obvious. I aim at the average human being, he being by far the most numerous of his tribe. There are from one to a dozen human-interest paragraphs in every man, woman and child. Each of these is susceptible to a hundred variations and repetitions. In projecting the obvious I pick up the commonplaces of life, or segregate its fads, its foibles, its follies and its futilities in paragraphs of three or four lines. These I tie with a blue ribbon and nail with a tack-hammer to the column.

For more than thirty years I have been taking "pot shots" at humanity from the friendly cover of a newspaper office. One thing in particular has impressed itself upon me. It is that, while the public likes the phraseological or conversational masseur, it loves the man who wallops it. The secret of Billy Sunday's mastery of his congregations is that he knows the psychology of the crowd. The man who writes good-humoredly and without heat, can say anything he pleases to the reading public and it will follow him around for more.

Since this is to be a frank and open confession, I may say that I play for, but not to, the woman reader. I do it with a reverse English. Men read the newspapers more than women read them, but women talk more about what they read. If I can induce three or four women in any given community to become exasperated

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and indignant concerning the manner in which I libel and insult womanhood, I can build up a clientele of readers in that community which will include the women who have become exasperated and indignant. If I can, in addition, create the impression that I am a "bad man," I can hold a clientele of woman readers indefinitely. Women prefer a good man, one who is resolute, noble and self-sacrificing. But they are likely to grow tired of him. On the other hand, their interest in a "bad man" never lags. Such as these are a few of the artifices and devices valuable in column-conducting as I have learned them by experience.

EVERYBODY'S has asked me to attach to this chronicle of my shame what I consider to be the best stunt I put over during the year. I am no judge of my own stuff. I never know whether it is good or bad, although I am frank to say I always suspect the worst. The thing, however, which seemed to induce the most complimentary reaction was a collection of hypothetical letters bearing upon certain details of the marital relation, which I ran under the heading, "The Explanations of a Summer Widower." It is herewith attached to the main document.

The Explanations of a Summer Widower

To Mrs. Adelaide Gaston, Somewhere Out West.

DEAR ADELAIDE—You want to know what I do evenings. Well, part of the time I look out of the window. The balance I devote to speculation as to the length of time the gentleman who rooms next door, and who shares a bathroom with me, will remain in tub, so to speak. Not that I care; I don't have to bathe, now that I am living alone. But the speculation occupies my mind and keeps it busy. My day is equally uneventful. I rise at eight-thirty or nine o'clock and dress myself carefully, keeping your admonition not to wear a longitudinally striped cravat with a striped shirt well in mind. Then I go out to breakfast, and, having breakfasted, forget your contention that it is vulgar to be shaved by a barber, and descend to the barber-shop, where I am made beautiful. Any man looks pretty well for five minutes after he has been shaved. Proceeding thence in a leisurely and nonchalant manner to the office, I exchange quip and jest with the staff and perform my work, such as it is. I spend the remaining portion of the day wondering where I shall eat dinner and what I shall do after I have eaten it.

I am delighted to hear the country-club is very lively. It must be pretty hot out there to have melted all that ice. I can see them yet sitting around in groups, the Episcopalians in one, the Christian Scientists in another and the fast set in a third, and I can hear you cautioning me that I must not "horn in" on them—the language is mine not yours—unless I am invited to do so. Yours with love,

DODD.

To Dodd Gaston, Esq., Philadelphia, Pa.

DEAR DODD—You poor man! You must be lonely with nothing to do; you were always so busy, especially when there were other women present. I am sorry you are having such a horrid time. Albert Reid told me he had seen you twice in New York, once on the Astor roof and once at the Biltmore, and that you were with those horrid Wattleighs both times. What can you see in them? Will Porter telephoned me after he came home from the East and said he had a long talk with you in Atlantic City. You must be just tied down to your desk in Philadelphia. Will said you had a new coat with patch-pockets and a belted back. It's silly in a man of your age to attempt to appear youthful. But do get a tailor who doesn't make you look like an old man.

Well, the "Tanks" Beverlys are going East this week and will stop off to see you. Mrs. Beverly will tell you all the news, so there's no need for me to write it. There was something in the paper about a pair of stockings you had bought. I didn't see it, but half a dozen persons called me up about it. Who were they for? I know I didn't get them. I hear you had lunch with Cullen Cain in Chicago. Lovingly,

ADELAIDE.

To Mrs. Adelaide Gaston, Somewhere Out West.

DEAR ADELAIDE—I'm glad you heard about me taking lunch with Cullen Cain. If I went with Cullen, I couldn't have gone with Lelia Constance Featheringham. A man can't eat lunch twice in one day. I've told you a thousand times I've known Lelia Constance ever since she was a little girl; they used to live across the street. Suppose she did want my picture? Every prominent man has requests for his photograph. You ought to be proud of it. Suppose I did give it to her? What's a photograph between friends? I ran into the Wattleighs accidentally both times. Anyhow, I wanted to see them. I'm planning to write some vaudeville sketches. I want to put the Wattleighs into one of them. If I write vaudeville sketches, I have to have "color," don't I?

Well, nothing to do but look out of the window. I wish I were out there where there is some life. With love,

DODD.

To Dodd Gaston, Esq., Philadelphia, Pa.

DEAR DODD—I am sorry you're so lonely. But you wait until the bridge "fiends" and poker "sharps" hear you're in Philadelphia. You won't be lonely then; you'll have something to do every evening. I don't think they've heard about you yet, because you're not complaining about how poor you are and how hard it is to meet the bills. Maybe, if they don't hear about you, we can save a little money. It has been done. I never was so humiliated in my life as I was the night you raised Frank Morris one hundred dollars on a pair of nines. I could see his hand and he had a flush all the time. All that money wasted. I don't care if red nines are your lucky cards. If you'd only play a decent game—ten-cent limit or something like that—I shouldn't mind. But you're a born gambler; and a mighty poor one.

I don't know what I'm going to do with the dog when I go to the lake. He knows there's something wrong and looks mournful and sad. Who got the stockings? As ever,

ADELAIDE.

To Mrs. Adelaide Gaston, Somewhere Out West.

DEAREST ADELAIDE—When you know that I am in my room by ten or eleven o'clock every night you can be pretty certain I am not "gambling," as you call it. I never have been far enough ahead of any game to leave it by ten o'clock in the evening. You know I wouldn't send you a cheap pair of stockings for a present. You know, when I get you a present, and I hope to do so before long, I am going to buy you that pin you admired so much. You know we settled on that. Mrs. Beverly didn't bring in much news. All she knew was some scandal and quite a bit of unconfirmed gossip. "Tank" wasn't looking well. I think he is breaking down under his wife's unjust suspicions. She keeps nagging at him all the time about other women. What woman would look at old "Tank"?

With much love,

DODD.

To Dodd Gaston, Esq., Philadelphia, Pa.

DEAR DODD—I am mighty glad to hear you are in your room by ten or eleven o'clock every night. It's the first time I have known where you were at night since we were married. Before we were married I knew where you were up to midnight; I've never known since.

Yesterday a telegram came for you. It said, "Going through on No. 6," and was signed "Mary." Your Aunt Mary, I suppose? You have an Aunt Mary, haven't you? Who got the stockings? As ever,

ADELAIDE.

To Mrs. Adelaide Gaston, Somewhere Out West.

DEAREST ADELAIDE—The only explanation I can think of for the telegram is that it was intended for Ephraim Gaston, the horse and mule buyer. You know the telephone people and the telegraph offices were always getting us confused. Remember how the telephone used to ring and central would say, "Long distance wants you," and it would be some fellow trying to sell me a bunch of mules? Well, I've had lots of old Ephraim's mail and telegrams, and probably a good many of mine have been delivered to him. Anyhow, I never knew anybody named "Mary."

I played golf with Percy Whiplett the other day, and after the game Mrs. Whiplett came up to their country-club and we had dinner together. She paid you a good many compliments—said you were charming and very stunning looking. With love,

DODD.

To Dodd Gaston, Esq., Philadelphia, Pa.
(Telegram)

Who got the stockings? ADELAIDE.

To Mrs. Adelaide Gaston, Somewhere Out West
(Telegram)

Sister Mabel. They were her birthday-present. DODD.

GEORGE ROBEY

TO VISUALIZE what the name of George Robey means to English theatre-goers an American must call up a composite picture of George M. Cohan, Charlie Chaplin, Joe Weber and Lew Fields, with a dash of Irvin Cobb thrown in for good measure.

Like our own versatile George M., Robey is not only the star comedian, he is the whole show. He can clown it in low comedy like Weber and Fields, and when the situation calls for it, add the touch of subtlety that makes Chaplin an artist.

As the theatrical folks have it, he is funny both "on and off"—sought after socially for his gift of droll repartee and popular with the reading public by reason of several humorous books, including "My Rest Cure," which was so well received here.

Two characteristic specimens of George Robey's deft waggishness are in store for EVERYBODY'S readers. The first of them, "Beware the Dog," will appear in the December issue.

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"I was crazy about the ring," she said. "I dreamed of it."

Miss Jeremiah

By Arthur Crabb

Again one of Crabb's stories of pleasant people and pleasant places, but with an unusual thrill, of mystery and love. In a month or so there'll be another, a bit different, but by the same author, called: "Jimmy Evans Comes Back."

WHEN a story has in it eight characters, it is perhaps just as well to straighten them out in the beginning and have it over with, play-like. So here they are:

JOHN HALSEY BOWERS—a charming gentleman, and a lawyer of high standing in the civil courts.

MRS. BOWERS—his charming and worthy wife.

HALSEY—their son, apparently in love with Hope.

HOPE JAYNE—not, apparently, in love with Halsey.

GEORGIANNA—a younger sister of Mrs. Bowers, an intellectual and independent woman.

SAMUEL LYLE—a famous criminal lawyer and criminologist.

ROBERT GRAY—classmate and friend of Halsey's.

MARJORIE WHITE—who deserves more than a word or two of description.

The scene is the Bowers's summer place; the time, part of an August.

EVERY one knew every one else, and had for years, except that Robert had never met Marjorie before. Samuel Lyle and Robert, the last to arrive, had come up together, and on the boat Samuel Lyle had told Robert something about Marjorie.

"She has had all sorts of trouble," he said; "one death after another in her family till she is practically alone in the world; she is poor and earns her own living, whereas she was designed for matrimony, motherhood and the domestic arts; she has none of the modern, vivacious, slap-dash intellectuality, but is a serious and deep thinker. Her greatest misfortune is that, at the age of twenty-eight or thereabouts, she has never fallen in love—or if she has there was a tragedy hidden away in it. She is often called Jerry, which she says is a nickname for Jeremiah, for whom there was nothing but hard luck—hence the word 'jeremiad.' But notwithstanding more hard luck than a dozen girls deserve, she has emerged from it all, alone, to be sure, but smiling and courageous."

Robert, arriving at the Bowers's house and meeting Jerry, discovered that her hard luck was not a thing of the past, for on the way up the day before, she had lost or had had her pocket-book picked of, fifty dollars. Hope Jayne might have lost it and not known it; to Jerry it was no laughing matter.

Robert's first impression of Jerry was that she was an aristocrat. Finally—he had an unusually soft heart—the loss of the fifty troubled him; it was a bad start for a girl's one month of play, a girl who kept business hours the other eleven. It troubled him the more because he insisted on putting a brave front on it and smiling.

The story skips the first two weeks of August, with the understanding that it may, if it wishes go backward later on and pick up a thread or two.

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Just before dinner on a night at the end of the two weeks, Hope Jayne, having received a small package during the day, exhibited its contents—a sapphire ring, rather large and surrounded by diamonds in an old-fashioned setting, an elaborate and very beautiful thing. She explained that it had come to her from the estate of her mother's aunt, who had died a year or so before. Hope was not wildly enthusiastic . . . the ring, well enough in itself for dinners, was not becoming to her. Hope was dark; the ring would become a blonde far more than her. It was a fine point—to prove it she put it on Marjorie's finger, and Marjorie, holding it at arm's length, admired it greatly. To Hope the ring was rather a nuisance than anything else; to Marjorie it would be, undoubtedly, a joy forever. It was another example of the way luck ran, for Marjorie. No great aunt had ever left her such a ring.

During that night Hope's newly acquired sapphire ring disappeared. The facts were quite simple. Hope had taken off the ring and laid it on the right-hand end of her bureau. Beside it she had placed a string of pearls, two small pins and her wrist-watch. Close by had been several other trinkets. Only the sapphire ring had disappeared

Hope had a corner room and the bureau was in a corner of it, diagonally between, and close to, two windows which had been open all night; she had locked the door to the hall and it was still locked in the morning; the only other door led to Marjorie's room. Marjorie, ready for bed, had gone into Hope's room, sat on Hope's bed—already occupied by Hope—and chatted a while. The chat finished, Marjorie had gone to the bureau, above which was the light which she intended to put out; she had seen the ring, had put it on again, admired it, spoken to Hope about it, put it back on the bureau, put out the light and gone to her room and to bed. She was absolutely sure that she had put the ring on the bureau and, to be more definite, she was sure she had put it inside a loop of the string of pearls that lay there.

Of course the question of a maid having gone into the room was discussed—fruitlessly, except that it furnished negative evidence. No maid could, by any possibility, have been in the room before Hope had discovered early in the morning that the ring was gone. Marjorie's hall door also had been locked, which left only the windows as an entrance for a thief, unless the thief had unlocked one of the hall doors from the outside.

The windows had been open, but they were a story and a half above the ground, and there was no piazza roof outside of them. Again, a thief, entering through a window, would not have been content with the ring when other valuables were with it. Hope and Marjorie had gone over the entire room with a fine-toothed comb and had not found the ring. It was all most mysterious, and a serious business.

MR. LYLE, the greatest of criminal lawyer and criminologists, told at once of the facts, had suggested that the two rooms be locked till after breakfast. This had been done, and after breakfast every one joined in a second search, which revealed nothing. They sat about the room, on the bed, on chairs and on window-sills, seeking light.

"Do either of you young ladies walk in your sleep?" Mr. Lyle asked.

Neither did, but Marjorie exclaimed that perhaps she had done so for the first time in her life and begged them to search her room.

"I was crazy about the ring," she said. "I dreamed of it—perhaps I got up in the night and took it and hid it."

They searched Marjorie's room and found nothing, which brought them face to face with a blank wall. If a servant had been in the room or had had an opportunity to be in the room, there would have been a loophole, no matter how trusted the servant might be; but no servant had been in the room. The windows and a real thief was the sole remaining possibility. They examined the windows, the wire screens, the sills, the walls below and the ground underneath, and did not discover a clue.

"IT IS perfectly evident that I am the only one who could have taken it," Marjorie said. She did not speak lightly—her face was sad.

"Forget it," Hope exclaimed. "It will turn up, and if it doesn't there's no harm done. I didn't care a snap for it—I should never have worn it."

That was all very well, but the Bowerses could not look at it in that light. Their position was most embarrassing, and Mr. Bowers acknowledged the fact frankly.

"Have you burglary insurance?" Mr. Lyle asked.

Mr. Bowers said that he had, and that it covered the property of his guests. That raised several points, for if the insurance were to remain effective the company must be notified immediately, which undoubtedly meant detectives on the premises and much annoyance and trouble with the servants, who would be suspected as a matter of course; and further, the simple disappearance of an article was not in itself a proof of theft, which would cause all sorts of unpleasant discussions.

"Did you ever see such luck?" Marjorie asked. "You can't help but think I'm the thief—it's the only possible explanation. Oh, Jerry—Jerry—Jeremiah."

The trouble was that it *was* the only explanation, even if Marjorie was not, by any stretch of the imagination, a thief.

"How do you know I didn't throw it out of the window?" she said, "where I can find it later on?" As a matter of fact they didn't know that she had not done just that.

"Are you particularly fond of jewelry?" Mr. Lyle asked. The question sounded as though Mr. Lyle had an idea.

"I never was before," she answered, "but I did like that ring." It was a complete confession. Then she added: "I have a lot of rings and things that I never wear—but nothing as beautiful as the sapphire."

Halsey spoke of the insurance again and it was discussed at length. Finally, from the piazza steps, Robert asked what the ring was worth. Hope hadn't the faintest idea, neither had any one else. They went back to the insurance again and came to the conclusion to do nothing about it, that day at least. Then Robert raised again the question of the value of the ring.

That Marjorie White had, knowingly, taken the ring, was utterly unbelievable, and yet leaving sentiment out of it, it was less improbable than that a skilled thief had entered and stolen it. The fact that only the ring had been taken was very nearly positive evidence that no such thief had come during the night.

The story leaves the eight on the piazza, searching for light, and goes backward to pick up a thread.

Robert, knowing that Halsey would devote himself largely to Hope Jayne, leaving Marjorie White to him, had looked forward to Miss Jerry with due interest and some perturbation. He had expected from Mr. Lyle's description on the boat, to find a young woman rather mouselike, a little dull, a little pathetic and fat; instead he had come face to face with this aristocrat, who smiled.

Her smile was a fascinating thing; it was very sweet and very beautiful, and one had to work a bit for it; it was an honest smile, not a smile put on involuntarily by long practise, with a lie attached to it. The suspected mouselike qualities had not materialized—Robert laughed at himself when he likened her rather to a tigress—calm and quiet, indolent perhaps in her cage, but capable of fury when aroused. He succeeded in arousing the tigress and found the sport strenuous enough for any one. The tigress business was an exaggeration, but no more so than the mouse; the mouse would never do, and with the passing of the mouse went the last thought of dulness.

The suggestion of pathos stayed on—which is where Robert's heart came in, and his imagination. Certainly she was not designed for seven or eight hours a day at a desk, in the marts of trade, finance, education or whatever it was—any fool could see that. The Lord had fashioned her for other and higher purposes. The elemental, protective male gave that idea an airing—femininity in distress, if good and beautiful, quickly arouses man's finer instincts; and if femininity in distress shows a brave front, is courageous, asks not for sympathy, then the appeal is stronger still.

All of which is, perhaps, a lame explanation of why Robert fell in love with Jerry. He being a male and a mighty good sort, and she being a female and a mighty good sort, it would probably have happened anyway, and quite as quickly without these several aids to emotion—his emotion. So far as Robert was concerned, it began with the impression of aristocracy, that is immediately, and matured with leaps and bounds, simply taking its natural course a little more rapidly than usual. With the leaps there was only one misstep; his consideration of the fact, aided and abetted by a remark of Mr. Lyle's on the boat, that Jerry wanted to be married. A woman of twenty-eight in that state of mind, with instinctive and circumstantially augmented leanings toward home life, is likely to take any decent and well-fixed man who comes along. Robert had no desire to be accepted by a woman solely as a representative of a class.

This misstep came at the end of the first week, and the thought was immediately and with much shame relegated to the cemetery of things a man wishes to forget, for he knew without any shadow of a doubt that Miss White was a woman who dealt honestly, who did not give short

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measure, whose honor was to be trusted implicitly; she would marry a man she loved, and none other—however materially advantageous the other's offer might be.

That was Robert's idea of the young woman—and it happened to be correct. He had proof of it, of a sort, when, in the late afternoon on certain sheltering rocks by the sea, he proposed and was refused, and hunt as he would he could find no loophole in her refusal. He did not see a sign of the cat—or tigress—playing with the mouse—or the man.

THE proposal having been made straightforwardly and as straightforwardly rejected, they were in a position to discuss the matter calmly. Robert admitted that it was a little sudden and Jerry questioned the use of "sudden." She had rather expected the proposal, she had been sure, for a week or more, either that it would come or that Robert enjoyed imagining himself in love, believing it to be a temporary and harmless dissipation. She had rather leaned to the former theory—the proposal had not therefore been unexpected and accordingly was not sudden; she preferred to look upon it as premature.

"But why wait—when I am absolutely sure of my love?" Robert asked.

"It's very nice of you to say that," she answered, "but it is not convincing. Of course I know you think you love me, but an affection, or love that springs up so quickly may die as quickly."

Robert, laughing, asked if the oak which grows slowly but surely and lasts through the ages, and the flowers that bloom in the spring and fade in the spring, illustrated her point.

"Exactly," she said. "All sorts of emotions may flash up suddenly, but they are unstable. I happen not to be built that way. I can not imagine loving a man until I have known him intimately, understood him thoroughly, seen him under all sorts of conditions, known his friends and family for a long time. Then I should be sure of him, and he of me." She laughed at him. "I have known you two weeks, under ideal conditions, when every one is playing."

"How long must a man serve his apprenticeship before he—before you would consider loving him—provided of course that he proves worthy of any consideration whatever?"

"I have never given it a thought," she answered. She was turning her ring on her finger.

"How long has the man in the ring served?" Robert asked. He had discovered a tiny and extremely indefinite snap-shot of a man's head in a seal ring she wore. It recalled Mr. Lyle's statement that if she had ever had a love-affair it had had a tragedy in it.

"Why drag in the man in the ring?"

"Simply because I want to know whether the field is open, equally, to all aspirants."

"Entirely," she said, and then she added, with complete simplicity: "I should like nothing so much as to be married—to the right man. I love no one—so far as I know no one loves me. I——"

"Except me," Robert interrupted.

"We won't argue that point now. I hope you don't mind my being frank; I am perfectly willing to admit that I have a more or less old-fashioned idea of woman, certainly so far as I am concerned. I do not crave independence in the least."

"What proof would you require that I am a model young man?" Robert asked. "We might save a lot of time if I got some affidavits instead of waiting for you to dig out the fact yourself."

"Don't be silly," she said, laughing.

"I'm not silly, but I am lucky—I have the most wonderful luck in the world. I wonder if it will stand by me now."

"It may help you get this nonsense out of your head."

"I have heard that you are very unlucky."

She looked at him for a moment. "It does seem sometimes as though I were," she said.

"Luck always changes—it never runs the same way forever. I wonder whether my luck or yours is going to change—first."

She thought for an instant. "Does or does not that sound just a little conceited?" she said. "I'm not quite sure, but I don't like conceited men; I'm sure of that."

"The man you love will have good reason to be conceited," Robert said. "Will you stop liking him then, for that reason?"

"I don't like silly men, either. It's time to go." She derived the information from her watch.

On the way to the Bowers's house Robert said that it was at least a good thing to have the cards on the table. "Mine are there," he said, "and it's a relief. I can look you in the eye; the game from now on is in the open."

"Are you suggesting that my cards are not on the table?"

"I'm not suggesting anything whatever, I'm just hoping." That might have meant a good many things. She looked at him, closely, on the steps—other people were within hearing:

"When I lay my cards on the table, face up, beside yours——" She hesitated, she blushed a little and went up the steps, leaving Robert completely at sea.

THAT night, at about dinner time the subject of Hope's sapphire ring appeared and was discussed. After dinner Halsey and Hope went off to a dance, announcing an early return; Mr. and Mrs. Bowers were content to read; the other four took up a combat that had waged continuously for ten days, or nights —Marjorie and Robert against Georgiannaand Mr. Lyle, at auction.

Georgianna liked a bit of gamble with her father's money, and her father was getting a little discouraged—the luck had been all one way. Marjorie, used, she said, to everlastingly poor cards, could not understand the sudden change. Robert, *sotto voce* after dinner, suggested that it was simply evidence that his good luck was master of her poor luck.

"Take me and your bad luck will vanish," he said.

She refused to believe in miracles, though one did seem to be staring her in the face. Robert did not weaken his cause by explaining that he was, beyond any question of conceit, by far the best player of the four, and that Marjorie was a very dependable partner playing carefully and having good card sense. The game was not all luck, by any manner of means.

They sat down and played, the Goddess of Good Cards fluttering first over one chair and then another; Georgianna, holding her own instead of losing steadily, foresaw the millennium; but the Goddess, becoming wing-weary as the evening wore on, perched herself on Marjorie's shoulder-strap and the tide swept a multitude of quarter-cent points away from Georgianna. At half-past eleven Marjorie dealt and declared no trump. Robert held a fine no trump himself. Georgianna sighed, Mr. Lyle led and Robert laid down the dummy. Marjorie looked at his cards and hers, studied them in combination for a moment and then, suit by suit, laid down her hand beside Robert's. The cards were solid for thirteen tricks, with one or two over had the law allowed.

Georgianna sighed again, and rose. Mr. Lyle said something about telling him the demnition total, and rose. Robert looked across the board at Marjorie.

"When you lay your cards on the table, face up, beside mine—what then?" he said.

She looked at him innocently. "A grand slam, in this case," she said. But then she blushed and her eyes dropped. She blushed rather easily, which Robert did not know was a recently acquired habit.

Hope and Halsey came in at that moment and the talk became general. That night Hope's sapphire ring disappeared.

THE story having picked up its thread, goes back to the eight on the piazza, facing the mystery and wondering what to do about it. Robert had raised again the question of the value of the ring.

The guesses ran from two hundred and fifty dollars to two thousand.

"How would you like to sell it?" Robert asked Hope.

Hope did not see how she could sell a ring that she could not deliver, and probably would never be able to deliver—if it ever turned up she would be delighted to sell it.

"Suppose I take the chance of its turning up?" Robert suggested. "In other words, what will you take for your rights to it? If it never comes back I lose the money; if it does, the ring's mine."

Hope didn't think that was fair to Robert, but he explained that it was a perfectly honest gamble, and eventually Hope agreed with him.

"Just to start negotiations I offer five hundred dollars," Robert said.

"Accepted, on the spot," Hope exclaimed.

"And witnessed?" Robert asked of the others. The transaction was witnessed, properly, Halsey suggesting that Robert was a damn fool.

"You can't tell. I may have the ring in my pocket this minute." He turned to Hope. "That's understood, of course? I may have found it while we were searching and said nothing about it."

"You didn't; it wasn't there," Hope said. "I'd have found it the first time if it had been."

"In Miss White's room, then."

"I'll take the chance—I've no faith in this sleep-walking business."

"I still think you're giving long odds," Halsey said to Robert.

Robert laughed. "I'm awfully lucky," he said. "I can afford to give long odds."

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"What on earth will you do with it if you do get it?" Georgianna asked.

"Use it for bait."

"Bait!"

"Certainly, to catch a wife. Did you, by any chance, fancy it?" Georgianna sniffed. "I'll be back in a minute," Robert said. "I'm going to write a check."

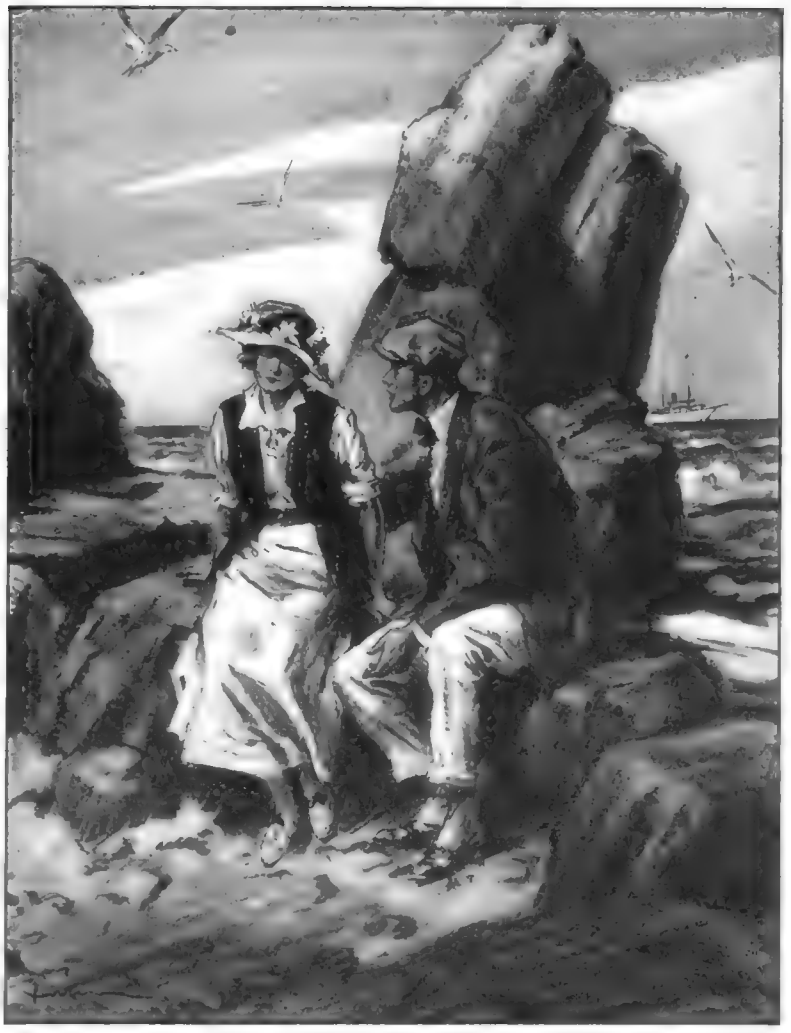
He returned with the check and handed it to Hope. "The transaction is completed, I take it, in the presence of witnesses."

"If the check is good," Hope said.

"It is—I'm sorry I can't have it certified. The point is that the ring is now my property, title rests with me exclusively. Every one understands that?"

Every one understood that.

"Good. Now for the point of all this. It is perfectly evident that Miss White has or did have the ring. It is utterly impossible for any one else to have taken it. She admits that she was overwhelmingly fascinated by it, which furnishes the motive. When she is caught with it in her possession, as she surely will be, I want the prosecution to be entirely in my hands."



The proposal having been made, straightforwardly, and as straightforwardly rejected, they were in a position to discuss the matter calmly.

"I wish you wouldn't joke about it," Marjorie exclaimed. "It's no joking matter."

"Of course it's not," Robert said. "Even Samuel Lyle, America's greatest analyst of criminal minds, the world's greatest cross-examiner and sifter of evidence of a criminal nature, confesses that, so far as he can see, you must have taken the ring. You see how embarrassed he is. Mr. Bowers, who knows something of evidence himself, is worried to death. His guest is robbed, another guest is guilty—he's in an awful pickle, or was till I came to his rescue."

He was close to Marjorie. "Don't worry," he whispered, "your luck can't stand up against mine. I'll get you out of this somehow, see if I don't."

Then to the others he said, "The lady criminal and I will trim any two at golf before bathing. Forget that blessed ring—it's mine, let me do the worrying—it's nobody's business, or loss, but mine, now."

Samuel Lyle was slumped down in his chair; his clothes lay in rolls all over him, his eyes were half closed; his lips, pressed together, moved unceasingly. He was thinking hard and he was stumped.

Georgianna's voice roused him. "Mr. Lyle!"

"Yes, yes."

"They can't beat us any worse at golf than they do at auction."

"No, that's so, they can't, can they? Oh! I see. Yes, suppose we play them." Then he turned to Marjorie. "Young woman, where is that ring?" he said, his expression and his smile belieing his words.

"I don't know—I didn't—I don't think I took it." Marjorie's face was pathetic. "I'm sure I haven't got it now."

"Of course you didn't take it, and of course you haven't got it—if you had, everything would be so simple. As it is, my poor old brain is topsy-turvy."

"Never mind," Robert said, "she'll have it some day, see if she doesn't."

If Marjorie had not blushed, no one would have thought much of Robert's words, but they saw the blush and laughed, which increased the blush tenfold. Fortunately, Marjorie scared up a laugh, which saved the day, partially.

Mr. and Mrs. Bowers, left alone on the piazza, discussed the situation seriously.

"It is most remarkable," he said.

"It is very unpleasant," Mrs. Bowers said emphatically.

"Of course, but what can we do?"

"Shall I ask the servants?"

Mr. Bowers shrugged his shoulders. "It would be useless—they can know nothing about it. It is utterly impossible that any of them unlocked one of the doors from the outside or got in through a window."

"Somebody must have taken it," said Mrs. Bowers, that being the one thing she was sure of.

"Naturally." Mr. Bowers sank into silence, which Mrs. Bowers finally disturbed by saying:

"Marjorie feels terribly about it. I think Robert understands that and tried to make light of it."

"Make light of what?" Mr. Bowers should not have cross-examined his wife in that manner.

Fortunately for her she was not restrained by legal procedure. "I believe, John, you think she had something to do with it."

"That is quite impossible, of course—on the other hand it is quite impossible that she didn't—and there you are. Hope didn't steal her own ring. Marjorie admits being the last one to have it, the thought of a robbery by an outsider is absurd. Sam is puzzled, certainly, and interested—things of this sort grip him; he calls them puzzles and is not at peace till he has solved them. He will evolve some theory which will work things out, see if he doesn't."

"Marjorie couldn't have had anything to do with it." Mrs. Bowers was emphatic.

"Of course not." Mr. Bowers spoke as though that were to be taken for granted.

"Then who had?" Mrs. Bowers's question was a demand, and again her husband shrugged his shoulders. "It is all distinctly unpleasant," she said. "It makes me creepy."

"Then let's drive over to the Knowles's—it will do you good, you and your creepy nerves." Mr. Bowers laughed at her. "Don't worry about it—Sam has his mind on it—he'll find the answer."

AFTER lunch that day Mr. Lyle asked Hope if he might go to her room, and was given permission.

Robert asked him if he wanted a magnifying glass or any other tools, which was ridicule, of course. Mr. Lyle refused to be disturbed and departed.

Robert whispered to Marjorie, "If you'll take a bit of a walk with me the great detective will need a spy-glass instead of a magnifying-glass to find the clever criminal."

Marjorie was, still, in no happy frame of mind.

"Can you keep a secret?" Robert asked. She clutched at the straw. "Yes."

"I'll tell you, away from here, somewhere. It's important."

She permitted herself to be guided to the rocks, an operation requiring some finesse to prevent its appearing too pointed to the rest of the piazza.

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Once safely there, she demanded: "What's the secret?"

"I still love you," he said.

"Is that all?" She was disappointed.

"Isn't that enough! Yesterday you doubted the stability of my love—you called it a sort of postponed puppy-love and insisted that it was, of necessity, based on silly emotion and not common sense. But my luck has been too good for you—the chance to prove my devotion comes immediately; you are caught, practically red-handed, stealing a ring, and my faith in you and my love never waver for an instant—the moment I know that you are troubled and unhappy it is all that I can do, not to go to you before them all and say——"

"I did *not* take that ring," Marjorie cried.

"I know you didn't, of course, but that's not the point—the others think you did. There is no other explanation—that's where my faith comes in."

"Are you teasing me?" she asked. "I wish you wouldn't."

"I wish you'd love me."

"I've explained that to you."

"Not convincingly. We'd get along beautifully, we are both steady-going people with the same tastes; I love you, all that's needed is for you to love me. Could I bribe you to do that?"

"You are the silliest man I ever knew." Marjorie was brightening up a little.

"If you should love me, and the ring came back would you look upon it as a satisfactory engagement ring?"

"That's more nonsense."

"If I promised you the ring, promised, on my word of honor, even if it required a miracle, to put it on your finger the instant you promised to marry me—what then?"

"I refuse to discuss absurdities."

"Is marrying me or the ring's coming back the absurdity?"

"Both are absurd."

"Promise to marry me and see if they are both absurd."

She looked at him intently. His voice, for all the nonsense he spoke, thrilled her. It was an entrancing game, playing with a man, a man like this, who was so very serious on so serious a subject. She had, perhaps, been sure of her ability to consider him calmly and dispassionately before she considered falling in love with him. Now she was not at all sure of herself. When, in the early morning, he had purchased Hope's rights to the lost ring, two facts had fitted themselves together before her—he loved her and he knew that she liked the ring very much.

SHE smiled at him as though he were a small boy, and suddenly the tigressy devil that was in her got the b·tter of her. "All right, I'll marry you—for the ring," she said.

He took her left hand in his, quickly, and with his other drew the sapphire ring from his pocket. She saw it and sprang to her feet. He sat perfectly still, she stood before him, trembling, aghast, her bosom rising and falling with her gasping breath. He smiled at her, and smiling, rose.

"Here's the ring, Miss Jeremiah," he said.

"It was a joke!" she cried.

"You do not love me?"

"No—no!"

"Give me your word of honor that this is so and the ring is yours—without me—if you will take it."

She stared at him, her face a fiery crimson, with fear in her blue eyes, till her lids fell over them, hiding them. Then she turned slowly to the sea.

"Your word of honor, Jerry—" His voice was husky.

He stood close to her, waiting. "Your word of honor that you do not love me, Jerry. Can you give me that?"

Her head moved slowly, a very little, from side to side. "No, I can't, Bob," she said, whispering, and then she laughed and faced him, and held her hands up to keep him away, but her hands could do nothing of the sort.

The sapphire ring fitted her finger perfectly.

"Of course it was all a joke—you'll give it back to Hope."

THEY argued that point—the trouble was that it was not a serviceable, every-day, family ring, it was a very dressy ring, for special occasions. Hope would be willing to swap back; the ring was worth much more than five hundred dollars, and Robert could get a very nice one, and one much more appropriate, for lots less than that. Robert suggested a compromise which Marjorie insisted was no compromise at all and was terribly extravagant.

Robert, having complete freedom of her hands, ran across the red ring on her other hand, the ring with the man in it. It required some skill to discover that she didn't know who the man was, that he'd been cut from a group of unknowns and put there for the purpose of teasing a friend—the friend being a girl.

Her complete abandoment of her previously propounded theory of the proper method of discovering whether a man would make a satisfactory husband would have offered a fine chance for teasing if she had not said: "Don't be a goose!" which ended the argument, except for a few blushing confessions. But Robert had to be forgiven for one thing and it was a pretty serious thing, too, when you came to think of it—he really should have told every one about the ring just as soon as he had known himself, and yet it *had* worked out all right—and it was awfully easy to forgive almost anything—that afternoon—lots easier than it would be by-and-by, when the novelty had worn off—Jerry said that herself.

They had straightened out all important matters, and a lot of unimportant ones, satisfactorily and were talking about luck when they reached the Bowers's, just in time to spruce up for dinner. Jerry had already given her hair considerable attention—hair which ordinarily remained neatly in place all day.

Marjorie was the last to rejoin the before-dinner group on the piazza. Robert asked Mr. Lyle if he had discovered anything, and Mr. Lyle shook his head. They were going over the ground again when Marjorie appeared.

Georgianna's eyes were the brightest and she shrieked. Mr. Lyle, for once in his life, gave a start of surprise—the rest uttered exclamations each after his or her kind. Marjorie refused to become excited.

"Ask Robert, he gave it to me," she said. They overlooked completely so unimportant a thing as the meaning of the gift, and asked Robert.

"Where did you find it?" It was a chorus.

"It was stolen—I discovered the thief."

Georgianna led all others in impatience.

"Who stole it?" she demanded.

"Marjorie didn't," Robert said blandly.

"Of course she didn't—aren't you going to tell us who did?" Georgianna's temper was rising.

"The night wind," Robert said, meekly.

"Will you be sensible?" Georgianna screamed it at him.

"It was the night wind—it really was, honestly. The night wind's a friend of mine, he came from out of the north last night especially for me, to bring me—you remember I said I wanted bait to catch a wife—Marjorie has taken the bait—hook, sinker and all—it goes without saying that I'm very much pleased and——"

"Dinner is served." The maid in the doorway heaped confusion on confusion. Even Georgianna left the original scent and followed the one that crossed it. The story has no ambition or ability to bring order out of that chaos, and passes on to the dinner-table, when Georgianna returned to the original topic:

"It *was* the night wind out of the north, the wind that whispers in the tree-tops, sweetly," Robert said. "The night wind that lulls those of clear conscience to sleep, the night wind——"

Georgianna raised a glass of water, threateningly, her intent clear. "Are you going to tell or aren't you?" she demanded.

Robert looked himself over carefully. "Everything washes—it *was* the night-wind—shoot," he said.

Georgianna put the glass down, disdainfully.

"Young man, are you going to tell us where you found that ring?" Samuel Lyle was severe.

"Jealous! Old sleuth made to look foolish by young one, ten cents a copy!" said Robert to the company.

Lyle grinned. "Quite correct," he said.

"WELL, you see it was this way," Robert became serious. "As I said, the night-wind—but, by the way, I didn't know where the ring was when I bought the rights to it. I had only a hunch, a sort of imitation Samuel Lyle inspiration. I was sitting on the steps, I saw the breeze come stealing in upon us, I saw it do various things, but most important I saw it lift the window-curtain gently and waft it inward, I saw the curtain, floating in the air like a lazy gull, touch the back of a chair and drag itself over it. I bought the rights to the ring, hastened upward and sneaked into Miss Jayne's room, and of course found the ring firmly tangled in the fringe of the window-curtain, and very nicely hidden by it. I give you my word of honor that Marjorie did not hook it. I'm the luckiest man alive—I needed bait, and the night wind brought it to me."

"It sounds fishy," said Georgianna.

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The Deadly Usual

By Grace Torrey

THE club library was dim and, for sticky August, cool. Rathbun's chair was comfortable. His cigar, brought him by a noiseless boy, was of the right leaf and the desirable age. He leaned back, shut his eyes, and thanked the gods. He had seen the last of the local magnates, admired all the geographic wonders of the region, inspected water-powers, placated rival municipalities, had talked with every one, offended no one, and had closed a business deal in which important water-rights were involved. Now he was free to go home. He was also very tired.

These diplomatic adventures were not unusual in Rathbun's life. As he lay back in the deep chair, he wondered why they had to be so much alike, why human beings differed so little. In the West here, why were they so unusually anxious not to differ at all? This club, just like any good club, anywhere, was a matter of pride in this Western town, less because it was good than because it was not different.

The men he saw prided themselves on being like men everywhere. They dressed like the men of New York, talked like the men of Boston. They were proud of having gone to college at Yale or Oxford. They all had to be treated just as one treated anybody. Amenities must be observed, tact must be employed. Discussions, brutal in fact, must be delicately made. Rathbun, very tired, experienced a desire to yell. A moving-picture cowboy galloping over the deep-piled carpet, a Westerner in a sombrero breaking in through the window, whooping and shooting things up, as they whoop and shoot things up only in fiction, would have relieved him. The tension in his arms would have relaxed and the pain in the back of his neck abated.

THAT was nonsense, of course. Rathbun hated noise. He would hate to have any one come into the room. Its emptiness, and the thought that to-morrow he would be clicking away from it over the rails, bound for the familiar East, were the two most comforting facts in his consciousness. He hoped he would know no one on the train. He hoped no one would come into the library before he finished his cigar. That done, he thought he would go to bed. A good night's sleep would set him up—if he could sleep. At this point, memory woke in his tired brain.

"Hang it all!" He sat erect. "I've got to make that call."

There was no help for it. She was some sort of connection of the Billy Wessings. He had met her once, three or four years ago, at their Long Island place. He had promised Billy Wessing and Mrs. Billy and all their aunts and uncles to look her up. She knew he was in town—had asked him to dinner, in fact, days ago. He had begged off on the score of business. This was his last night.

"Hang it all!" he ejaculated, and smote the arm of his chair with an exasperated hand. She would be like all the women he had ever known. He remembered her very well. She had been just like all the girls he knew then. Finishing-school and two years of travel, on top of governess and six years of French. Since then she had come out, had done war work or something in a good-looking uniform. Mrs. Billy had, in fact, shown him her picture in one. Maybe she had gone in by now for courses in something. She must be twenty-five. If girls didn't marry, they usually went in for courses at about that age. Or she might have cut her hair and gone in for general violence. They did that sometimes, too, at about that age. He drew fiercely upon his cigar and wondered what was the matter with girls anyway.

RATHBUN was not, as may be guessed, entirely a ladies' man. He did not hate women. He classified them. They were pretty and nice, and expected flowers, compliments and candy, or they were terrific, and expected to bandy insults with all male comers. In either case they knew nothing, and no conversation with them was possible, or they knew everything, did all the talking, and he felt pecked at in their presence. Rathbun liked good conversation, and he did not like to be pecked at.

However, he must get into some clothes, make this call, and get it over. It would square him with Mrs. Billy Wessing and it could be brief.

He almost bumped into Tom Hoffman as he made his way out of the dim library into the hall. In the bright light, he saw that Tom was in athletic array, knee-breeches and woolen stockings above high boots, and other fit accouterments.

"Hadn't thought of it before, but you're just the man I need," said Tom. "Hill has an ulcerated tooth."

"Sorry," said Rathbun. He had known Tom Hoffman for three days, Hill not at all. "I wish I knew what to do for ulcerated teeth. Perhaps a dentist——"

"That's not what I mean," said Tom Hoffman. "He's swelled up like a puff-ball and emitting patient groans, until morning. He has a dentist all right, who'll fix him up. But it's likely to be a matter of ten days or two weeks. So you're to take his outfit and catch the eleven-o'clock train with me. You'll understand this later."

Rathbun leaned against the solid door jamb of the club library.

"I have to make a call," he remarked.

"Call nothing! Make that when you come back. Only be gone for two weeks. Do you good. Make a better call."

Rathbun surveyed him. He had not heard that Tom Hoffman was touched particularly. He had been introduced merely as some one who sold bonds. Of course he might be on the verge of some outbreak. Rathbun smiled his ever-ready, winning smile.

"I'd go anywhere with you," he said. "For any period. Gladly. If it were possible."

"Perfectly possible. Use all Hill's things. He has his whole A. E. F. outfit. Grandest army mattress you ever saw. Puttees and all fixings. Ticket all bought. Dunnage packed and gone. And you've never seen the Antelopes. Do you good."

"Antelopes." Rathbun, repeating this politely, felt that he had finger on some kind of a clue.

"Bet you never heard of them. Finest bunch of folks in the whole world."

"Folks—" repeated Rathbun, again following up his clue.

"Yep. People. Human beings."

"An organization of some kind." Rathbun felt that Sherlock Homes could not have equaled him.

"You bet. Go out with them every summer. Two weeks. Climb mountains. Feel fine. Sleep on the softer side of rocks. Great stuff. Paradise Valley this year. Hummer of a place."

"Paradise Valley." Rathbun had not known himself before in the rôle of parrot.

"You bet. Dandy spot. Wild flowers. Bear. Snow. Mountain peaks. Dashing waterfalls. Vistas. Great heart of Nature and all that. Mosquitoes, too. Bet your life. Hill has plenty of mosquito-netting in his dunnage."

"These Antelopes," Rathbun patiently unraveled, "are a mountain-climbing group who are about to enjoy their annual outing. The party leaves to-night at eleven for Paradise Valley. Delightful name. Your friend, Mr. Hill, who was to accompany you, is unfortunately ill, and you are offering me his equipment, and the pleasure of your society with the other Antelopes for two weeks."

"Precisely. Just what I've been saying more briefly for ten minutes."

RATHBUN, leaning against the door-jamb, considered. The thing, unreasonable enough, had attractions. He lived, in general, an excessively reasonable life.

"How about credentials?" he asked. He belonged to the Appomattox Club on the Eastern coast. They required all members to produce one grandfather and be guaranteed by two Personages.

"Credentials?" Tom Hoffman stared. "Oh, that'll be all right! What you'll need is legs. The Antelopes hike quite a little. I take it you've said you'd go."

Rathbun laughed. He was tired. He had a stiff winter ahead of him. August in New York was trying. He could squeeze in two weeks.

"I suppose I could make that call when I come back," he hesitated.

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"Sure. Come along and get into Hill's clothes. Rotten about his tooth, isn't it?"

As Rathbun, in the boots, puttees and other outing uniform of the unfortunate Hill, stepped from his train at Tacoma the next morning, Tom Hoffman, at his side, was engaged in giving the high sign to a clattering herd of Antelopes, similarly accoutered and similarly hurrying breakfastward. So far as Rathbun could discover, every Antelope had only a first name and was his companion's oldest friend.

"Don't let the What-you-call-'ems worry you," Tom remarked, as they headed toward the station restaurant. "You're probably not used to them, but they're an awfully good sort."

Rathbun stared at him, feeling sure that if he were less unslept from the night trip he would know what Hoffman was talking about.

"The What-is-its, I mean," Tom explained. "There's one just ahead."

Rathbun looked, and saw ahead rather a short stocky figure, dressed as he was dressed and carrying a knapsack.

"I don't see anything unusual about that," he began, when Hoffman sang out unexpectedly:

"Hello, Fanny!"

As the stocky figure turned and waved a hand, Hoffman had time to grin and say:

"You thought it would be George, didn't you? Well, when you think it's George, and it turns out to be Fanny, then it's a What-is-it. You'll see quite a few on this party. No skirts after Tacoma."

Then he made introductions after his own fashion, in which Rathbun half heard Fanny's other name.

AS he sat beside her on a stool at the lunch-counter, he tried in vain to remember it. Smith? Jones? Brown? Maybe it had been Weisendanger or Hemingway. Hoffman, greeting more Antelopes and making an eclectic breakfast of ham and eggs with one group, doughnuts with another, and coffee somewhere else, could not rescue him. Rathbun, keeping a busy conversation going, found himself continually coming up against the blank wall of that forgotten other name. It annoyed him. If he had been Hill, sitting there in Hill's clothes, it would not have annoyed him at all, he supposed. Hill was probably one of these rugged fellows who found first names all they needed. Well, why not? Why shouldn't he, for the time, be this rugged Hill? He looked his neighbor in the eye, Hill-fashion, as he fancied. She had candid eyes that returned his look squarely, and a nice, useful sort of face.

"Fanny," he said with what he felt was a Hillish grin, "what do you say to a second cup of coffee?" And with a gesture meant to be Western and sweeping he pushed their two heavy railway-station china cups across the marble counter toward the waitress.

He met a hundred Fannys and Georges before train travel ended that day, and the motor-bus cavalcade began a winding ascent of mountain roads that should form next to the last lap of his trip for Eden Vale. Or perhaps it had been Happy Hollow? Or Elysian Something? As there were forty Antelopes in every bus whose maximum capacity was twenty-five, and as the driver of each bus roared ahead upon a private speed-contest between himself and all other drivers in the world, Rathbun found himself getting up a considerable intimacy with the Fannys and Georges piled about on each other in his own demon vehicle. At intervals a George or two were piled on him, perilously careening as Apollyon on the front seat cut out his muffler and rounded a quarter-circle turn at a thirty-knot gallop.

"When do we reach this Resthaven that we are going to?" he shouted to the George rocking upon his knees as Apollyon speeded up a little more.

As the George looked around at him, wondering, Rathbun fortunately remembered, by his thick-rimmed glasses, that his name was Dick.

"Resthaven? Never heard of the place," he yelled, clutching Rathbun's shoulder. Rathbun blushed deeply.

"Eden, I should have said," he corrected himself. He clung to Dick and Dick to the stanchions or mainstays of the vehicle, while Apollyon executed frightful triumphs of velocity.

"Eden Vale, or some such name," he explained, when life seemed slightly less insecure.

"You mean Paradise Valley?" Rathbun reddened yet more. That was it. Paradise Valley. He had seen many Paradises and Edens, usually from train windows. They were lonely stations, or even sign-posts, solitary in alkali deserts, as he recalled. By analogy this Paradise Valley would be some bleak glacier, or perhaps a mountain swamp. At any rate, he clung to the elusive tail of its name.

"Paradise Valley. Dick. Fanny. George. Howard," he recited to himself, as Apollyon roared in between tall pines and Dick gave him the lore of the trip. This stage journey would be fifty miles long, if Apollyon willed that they should reach its end alive. Then they could take another stage and drive another three hours' worth. Or some of the Antelopes meant to hike from that point. Dick gave names and geography convulsively as Apollyon lurched along. The trail was fine. A short seven miles. Great view. Rathbun ought to take it.

"I think, if this trail you speak of is picturesque," he jolted out as Apollyon once more let loose, "I think I may tramp."

"Sure," said Dick, gleaming at him through his bone-rimmed glasses. "Fine hike. You'll get into camp hungry as a wolf."

HE tramped, or as he began to say to himself, hiked it, in company with Dick, Tom Hoffman, Fanny and some twenty other Georges. It turned out to be a thirteen-mile hike instead of seven. At least, some of the Georges said thirteen. Others said it was nine. As Rathbun's metropolitan legs, in Hill's outing casements, marked off stride after stride, always upward through great forests, mysteriously veiled in fog, he began to have revised conceptions of the mountain mile. He began to linger a little behind the Georges. One of them, a Doctor Somebody, fell back with him. Doctor Somebody was the president of the Antelopes and spoke with authority. As the crow flies, the trail was a short seven miles. For the first time in his life, Rathbun questioned the wisdom of Nature. Why had he not been born a crow?

Doctor Somebody was talking cheerfully. He had often hiked it himself in less than three hours, going at a comfortable clip. Of course, strolling along as they were strolling now, they would not reach camp before nightfall.

Rathbun, whose legs had given notice miles back that they would thankfully repose, inflated the chest of Hill's flannel shirt.

"Well, thunder!" he ejaculated, rugged Western vigor in his tones. "Why don't you and I speed this thing up a little?"

"Sure," agreed Doctor Somebody. "I'd like to get into camp while its light enough to hike around and see the country. Come on. Let's hike ahead."

Rathbun, with sinking heart and legs whose resentment extended now well up toward his eyes, hiked valiantly ahead. He and Doctor Somebody began to pass the Georges like stationary milestones on the trail.

"Come on!" he cried as Fanny and Tom Hoffman slipped behind him. "Don't you want to get into camp while there's light enough to hike about and see the country?"

To his alarm, Fanny and Tom Hoffman thought this a first-rate idea. Idling along as they had been idling was really a great bore. On a trail like this, four miles an hour was the ticket.

Rathbun set his teeth and accelerated his stride.

"Let me take your knapsack," he breathed gallantly to Fanny, who gave him an ungallant look.

"What do you take me for?" she asked. "A perfect lady?" She smiled at him, a disarming smile. Groaning inwardly, Rathbun noted her fine color, the easy swing of her stride, and himself affected a more dashing air.

THE mist, wreathing among the pines, grew denser. A soft, thick silence blanketed them about, until not a hundred yards were visible on either side of the trail. Beyond the stealthy barrier the roaring of a glacial stream was faintly heard. Once they stood on a bridge over the tumultuous gray water, up whose course Tom Hoffman said was a wonderful view of Rainier in fine weather. Hardly a hundred feet up-stream the gray of the mist and the gray of the water melted into each other. When at last the trees gave back and the trail spread out into the floor of a mountain valley, the mist closed down jealously. At his feet, Rathbun could see the nodding heads of dog-tooth violets, white, ghost-like under the gray. A few feet beyond, on either hand, were furry little anemones, cuddling close to the ground. Then came snow, stretching into the fog, as he felt, without end. Beyond the snow, he supposed, was other snow. Beyond that, yet higher fields.

The world, diplomacy, water-rights and tobacco-wreathed club libraries lay somewhere behind, below all this. With every weary step of his leaden legs Rathbun was putting it farther behind him. Fatigue misted his eyes and made mere automatic pendulums of his feet. Before him strode Fanny, springing easily at each step, throwing over her shoulder glad recognition of a crimson paintbrush or a spread of heather, pink and white among the violets. Rathbun felt that he was to walk on forever, in mist, with shadowed pines lurking, veiled at the horizon's edge, and a hot pain boring into his right

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"Please get me out of here," came a little voice. "I'm so cold and wet."

hip-joint. He was beginning to be a mere sodden mass of labored motion, when Tom Hoffman gave a shout. He had sighted the cook-tent. Rathbun wiped the mist from his eyes. Dimly he could make out a shadowed hulk ahead. It might have been more pine trees or a jutting rock-pile. But as his feet, slightly spurred, crunched through untrodden snow-fields, the hulk defined itself.

"Smell that smell?" called Hoffman. "Beans, as I live!"

He ate beans, standing on snow-soaked feet by the cook-stove. The cook morosely opened other cans with an ax. Antelopes in twos and threes straggled in, wet, weary, jovial. The cook glowered at them all. He was a city man. This snow wilderness in the fog, with supplies not yet unpacked, firewood not half ready, and grinning idiots thronging around demanding more beans and hot coffee, offended him. These people had homes, he supposed. What were they doing here? He opened cans with his ax violently.

Very little dunnage had arrived. The mist, closing down, began to drip like rain. Rathbun, surrounding his second plate of beans, foresaw a night spent sitting up by the cook-stove. He supposed that would be as good a way as any to prepare for death. Wet feet always gave him a cold. Beans he never had been able to eat in his life. The end would be painful. He hoped it might be brief. Antelopes, about him, were busily arranging to make half enough blankets go around. A few shamefacedly made down-hill through the snow to an effete hotel somewhere; Rathbun found Tom Hoffman inviting him to roll up with him in somebody's blankets.

WHEN he awoke the next morning, Tom Hoffman was unrolling himself from the blankets they had shared together and was reaching for their shoes drying against the cook-stove.

"There's a wind," he announced. "That fog ought to lift. Let's get out and hunt for the mountain."

Rathbun gingerly sat up. He was not dead. He was not even stiff from his exploits of yesterday. And the beans were only a pleasant memory. He thought of the half grapefruit and the single slice of toast over which he lingered without appetite every morning.

"Breakfast about ready?" he shouted. "I'm hollow to my toes."

As he struggled into stiff boots, half-dried from the night, other Antelopes began to appear. They had bunked in the cook-tent or under trees, sharing blankets, and letting the fog drip as it would about them. The morose cook, banging pots and pans about, began to fry potatoes. Rathbun, who avoided fried stuffs as he did the plague, watched him. This gnawing sensation under Hill's belt must be what people meant when they talked about hunger. He had not felt it for twenty years.

Two plates of fried potatoes went under the belt with surprising ease. A second cup of the black and bitter brew the cook called coffee followed after the potatoes. Huddled Antelopes, their sweaters high about their necks, stood in line outside the cook-tent and fortified themselves with similar indifference to inner revolution. The fog swirled about them, icy and penetrating. Vague, lurking upon an undetermined horizon, were shapes that might

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have been dream-trees. But there was stir in the fog. And as Rathbun looked straight up into it, he could see faint hints of blue in the gray.

"Hey!" yelled Tom Hoffman. "Look out for Rainier. She's going to show herself any minute."

Rathbun looked around. He had no idea where Rainier might be, or what she might be like behind the wall of gray. As he looked, the wall, solid, impenetrable, stirred, dissolved. The sun, driving through the shifting vapor, seemed to send a keen sword through the veil that hung before his eyes. It slipped aside. There, towering over him, so that he started as if thrust back by a huge advancing presence, glittered Rainier, massive, snow-bediamonded, against the clean washed blue of heaven.

"There she goes!" yelled Tom. "Three cheers!"

Rathbun threw his tin coffee-cup in the air and yelled with the rest.

"By George!" he shouted to Fanny at his side, "I never saw anything like that. She's near enough to put your hand on her." He was laughing, at what he did not know. And at the same moment he rather wanted to cry.

HE folded his arms and looked about. Paradise Valley lay around him, snow-drifts among the blue of lupin and the pink of Indian paintbrush. The Tatoosh range cut a jagged profile behind him against the morning sky. Pines circled the rim of the lovely hollow in which he stood. And, closing the circle, all frosted sparkle in the sun, bulked the glittering jewel of the mountain.

"By George, Fanny!" he called, "we've got to make the top of that, haven't we?"

"We have!" she said. "But first let's go sliding."

It seemed that everybody was going sliding. Rathbun ran with the rest, taking his alpenstock with him by Tom Hoffman's orders. He did not know where he ran geographically. He seemed to be running in time rather than space, arriving finally back in his little boyhood. Feeling perhaps eight years old, he found himself standing at the crest of a snow ridge watching Tom Hoffman, erect, steering himself by his alpenstock, make a magnificent descent of a steep four or five hundred yard slope. He put out an experimental foot, not meaning to do anything extreme. But the snow crust was slippery. The little boy that he had forgotten suddenly sat down on the snow-bank, clutching at anything that might stay him, while the world zipped by. At the end of a breathless eternity, the little boy landed, a mass of arms and legs, in a bank of soft snow, at Tom Hoffman's feet.

"Hurt?" asked Tom.

Rathbun looked up at him, and the little boy laughed in answer. It was not the laugh of diplomatic intercourse and polite arrangements. It was the loud, hearty ha! ha! of uninhibited youth.

"Ha! ha!" he heard himself shouting as he whacked snow from inside his sleeves and the seat of Hill's trousers. "Hurt nothing! Let's do it again!"

All morning he climbed the ridge and slid down again, sometimes alone, sometimes one of a long toboggan of Antelopes. When the curious gnawing under Hill's belt grew insistent, he ran with the rest, leaping, sliding and yelling, back to camp. There the morose cook, thinking city thoughts, handed them out steaming plates of something, anything. He did not care what it was.

"Lots of it is all I ask!" He grinned as he took his portion.

Thirty-six hours before, a tired man with a pain in the back of his neck had sat in a dim room, hoping no one would come in. Rathbun, strolling hilariously about among the Antelopes, could not understand that man. In fact, he could not remember him. His own immediate physical sensations, the sparkle of the day, the kindly human jollity of the men and women whose names he hardly knew, the sweeps of snow and green, the glorious abandon of waterfall and turgid stream, the dominant mountain towering at his shoulder whichever way he turned—these crowding impressions obliterated all thought of tired men and conventional, dim libraries.

"What dandy fellows these are!" he said to himself as he looked about at the Antelopes. "What a stunning world it is!"

"Hello, Fanny!" he said, sitting down beside her at the long board counter that served as the Antelopes' dining-table. "When do we go up that mountain?"

That, in fact, became the question behind everything Rathburn did the next few days. He hardened up his muscles by experimental climbs. As days went by, he found his nerves steadying, until he could stand on a six-inch ledge and look off into a blue vista of peaks, glaciers and lakes without the nausea of his first attempt. Every night when he lay under the march of the stars, facing Rainier, wraith-like under the moon, he renewed his vow before sleep drugged him. Each morning, when sunrise woke him like a trumpet, his first thought was that he was a morning nearer the day when he should make the top.

THEN he made the scrambling climb up Pinnacle Peak, and on the last half-mile of level trail over snow-fields into camp, managed to turn his ankle. It was not much of a twist, but it kept him awake that night. The next day the Antelopes went off without him to Cowlitz Glacier. A party of seventeen started for the top. They looked like a comic-opera troupe, with faces painted against snow-burn, alpenstocks in hand, their blanket-rolls slung about their shoulders. Rathbun limped after them a few hundred yards, then gave it up. His ankle, swollen by now, acutely rebelled at every step. He sat about camp all day, solitary save for the chipmunks, watching the antlike line of the climbers against the snow. Rainier loomed huge, silent, beckoning, into the dome of arching sky. By nightfall, when Fanny and Tom came in with the others who had spent the day on the glacier, he had satisfied himself that not to make the top of the mountain would symbolize for him the failure of his whole life.

He had never desired anything as he desired this. Not to achieve it began to assume to him the appearance of overwhelming psychological defeat from which he would never recover. Whatever else he might do in life, whatever the world might think of him, he would always know himself to be unfit. The mountain would have eluded him.

Fanny looked once at his dejected face, and made a few sharp inquiries. Then:

"You let me see that ankle," she commanded. She was fairly weary after a strenuous day on the glacier, but she kept hot compresses going until a late hour.

"We'll keep it up all day to-morrow. You'll be fit as anybody in three days. And we'll make the top of that mountain together," she told him.

Fanny, he discovered, was a trained nurse. "Good old Fanny!" he said to himself as he kept his vigil with the mountain that night. "She'll get me up there."

Fanny gave him all the next day, patiently wringing hot cloths, while Tom Hoffman kept the fire going under the kettle. Other Antelopes drifted by, kindly and optimistic. They were all pulling for him, they said. And he was in the hands of the best trained nurse west of Anywhere. When Fanny once got her hands on a man, he might as well consider himself cured. If she said he could make the top with that ankle, he might consider himself as good as there right now.

Rathbun told himself he would never forget these kindly people. As for Fanny, if her garment had possessed a hem, he would have kissed it. By nightfall, when she inspected his ankle and said he could go anywhere in the world on it in another two days, he felt she had given him back self-respect, happiness, everything in life worth having.

TWO days later her prophecies were fulfilled. He was one of the twelve who left camp for the big hike, as they called it. It would be the last party of the season. The other Antelopes had all either tried and failed or tried and made it. They gave the last twelve a hearty send-off. If good-will would get him up there, where Rainier lifted its face to the zenith, he knew he had it behind him. The guide gave him a friendly smile, his teeth gleaming white in his blackened face.

"You walk right behind me. Put your feet in my tracks. We'll set the pace for the others."

Fanny was third in line. She looked rather like the Queen of Sheba among the blackamoors, Rathbun reflected. She used a ravishing theatrical make-up and wore a floating scarlet bandanna that fluttered out from her head, a brilliant streamer in the breeze. Behind her Tom Hoffman, black and grinning, flashed his teeth at Rathbun:

"Got your goggles? You'll need them on the snow." Just beyond him, Doctor Somebody, looking like a bandit in brown grease-paint, a sombrero and a scarlet handkerchief, was adjusting his own darkened glasses. Behind him was Dick, simply attired in blue overalls and loggers' boots. Dick affected a dark-red paint and put his faith in a snow-pack on top of his head under his cap. Other Georges and Fannys made up the twelve, each in his numbered place in line.

"Fall in!" called the guide. "No talking!"

"Good luck!" the Antelopes called after them as they made their first slow strides. Cameras clicked, hands were waved.

"Good luck! A hundred per cent. climb!" they called.

"Wonderful fellows!" Rathbun was thinking, as he stepped watchfully in the footprints of his guide. They were all behind him. The guide was shortening

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"Good-by, old friend!" he thought, as he looked his last on the mountain. "Wait for me. I'll come again."

his stride for his sake. Fanny, he knew, would give him a reassuring nod any time he turned around. Tom would hearten him. Dick would wish him well. The whole herd of Antelopes would be watching them through their glasses. They would count the black specks in the line zigzagging across the snow. They would hope for twelve.

"By George!" he told himself, "they all want me to do it. I'll make it, just to please them."

HE had need of his resolve. The five hours' ascent to the ten-thousand-foot level that they made by eight o'clock that night was nothing but a good long snow climb. Doctor Somebody said there would be some very pretty rock work tomorrow. Meanwhile, they bivouacked at Anvil Rock for the night. The Tatoosh range lay below them, a fretted stage-scenery of mimic hills. They could see Paradise Valley and the Antelopes' camp. Below that was the effete inn, where automobile nurselings took their mountaineering by looking through telescopes on the porch. To-morrow morning, Rathbun realized, the telescopes would be leveled at his line of twelve. He made his private vow to keep it twelve as he lay in his blanket - roll on the rocks watching the moon ride high among the stars, silvering Adams, St. Helens, Jefferson, and, far down the horizon, Hood, snow-clad brothers, guarding with Rainier the blue reaches of the upper air.

They were on guard at three the next morning when the twelve crunched across the snow, their feet making the only sound in the still moonlight. There was an ascent of thirty-four hundred feet ahead of them in the next three miles. Rathbun, full of strong tea and bouillon and a half hardtack, stepped out resolutely. The thing, now, was to be done on nerve and on his reserve. Shortness of breath, threatened nausea, legs that grew heavier as fatigue increased and oxygen grew scarce, rocks, ice, narrow ledges, steep slides, with crevasses yawning at their end, were all against him. The coming hours would see his fiber pitted against the sinews of the mountain. The sinews of Rainier were there for all to know. Her huge frame, snow-draped, ice-sheathed, armed with wind and storm, could repel at will the puny human mites that essayed her conquest. Even if she elected to be mild, there were many who must turn back. Mountain sickness weakened the strongest. There was no cure for it, and no going on. Camp Misery, at the twelve-thousand-foot level, had seen the collapse of many a Samson. In Rathbun's group of twelve one girl had suffered already. She was starting out this morning, however, valiantly. Rathbun, who had thought himself the weakest link in the chain, felt a throb of happiness. Perhaps the hundred per cent. climb would hinge upon a yet weaker link. He consulted with the guide. Then:

"Bess," he called to the little girl, "take my place behind the guide. It's easier work if you step just where he does."

Like every one else in camp, she was known to him by her Christian name. They all had other names in that world of neck-ache that he had forgotten, just as they all had avocations, he supposed, and social place. Here they were merely human, nothing but friends. He had played with them all, gone swimming in icy pools, sliding on glaciers, panting up resisting cliffs, picking mountain violets. What did he care about their names? He gave Bess a smile.

"You're getting on in fine shape. You'll make it. Don't you worry." Then the guide gave his command, and the twelve went at their silent task. Wordless, they made slow way up the giant stairway of the Cleaver, went hand over hand up the rope at the chute, gingerly followed the slippery ledge skirting Gibraltar Rock. In front of Rathbun, Bess was getting her breath in sobs. At every hundred paces the guide halted them for a rest. Hours that seemed days went by. The mountain, vast at the beginning of the climb, seemed to have expanded. The top, at eight o'clock, looked farther away than in the blue twilight of three. Dawn had stolen upon them and gone. A slow two hours more, and Camp Misery was reached and passed. The guide went down the line.

"How about it, Bess? Want to stop?" And to Rathbun, "How's it going, old man?"

Bess shook her head at him. She was beyond speech. But she was going on. Rathbun summoned every ebbing energy of his being.

"Fine as silk! Never better!"

"All ready then! Fall in!"

THE watching telescopes on the effete inn porch counted them as they specked the snow steeps beyond Camp Misery. The Antelopes in Paradise Valley had their glasses trained upon the trail.

"Nobody's out. Twelve of them still going," they told each other. Rathbun, thinking they were watching, and thinking each labored step in the long grind of snow-fields between Camp Misery and the Gap would be his last, set his teeth and found strength for one more.

He lay at last, at one o'clock, flat on the breast of Mount Rainier. His pulses

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pounded, his head ached. He gasped, rather than breathed. But he was there. The mountain, impersonal, remote, was his friend. He had been worthy of her sinews. About him lay or sat the others, all there, all twelve. They would always understand each other, these twelve, Rathbun thought. Explanations would need to be few between them. They were good fellows. Generous, gallant, each eager to help the other, each game to the last gasping inch of his own strength. The guide looked at his watch. One-thirty! They must move and move fast. By three the afternoon sun would be sending avalanches through the chute; they had barely time to make it.

"Everybody hustle!" he commanded. "Nobody can keep the line back."

It was nearly nine o'clock that evening when the straggling twos and threes grouped outside of camp. The guide assembled them, and marched them into camp in military formation. They found energy to swagger and breath to yell.

"Hundred per cent.! Hundred per cent.!" They barked it at the other Antelopes who crowded around.

As Rathbun kept his vigil with Rainier that night, he remembered that every Antelope had wrung his hand, or slapped his back, or even put an arm over his shoulder affectionately. The ones who hadn't made it themselves had been warmest of all.

"Fine!" they had said. "Congratulations. Glad you made it."

Rathbun lay and looked at Rainier, silver under the moon. Beckoning, mocking once, she mocked no longer. They were friends. They respected each other. As Rathbun's eyelids closed, he was saying:

"Good old Fanny! She got me there."

THE next morning every peak on the horizon was flying a flag. The guide, at breakfast, looked at Rainier, a veil of mist on her brow, and shook his head.

"I wouldn't take you up there to-day for a thousand dollars," he said. "There's a storm coming."

Rathbun heard him thankfully. They had made it just in time. He had only one more day in camp. He wondered if Fanny would go out with him, perhaps, only to McClure Rock. He felt as if he must say good-by to his mountain. He would like to say it with her. But Fanny was rather spent with her adventure.

"Fact is," she told him, "I was about all in last night."

"And yet you were helping everybody. All day long I saw you. Always a smile for the other fellow and not a whimper for yourself. Fanny," he stopped for something especially fine and fit to say, "Fanny," he ended, "you're all right."

He said it over to himself a good many times that morning as he made his way to McClure Rock alone. It was a perfectly safe venture. The trail was clear, and there were no crevasses. He sat sheltered from the rising wind, at noon, eating his hardtack and cheese and raisins and resting back against the rock of his mountain. It had been a wonderful morning. It had made the last two days particularly live. Now he must go back down to people and to commonplaceness. This adventure must become mere memory. As he sat, he could see fog-wreaths drifting swiftly up the cañons. He stood up. Yes, the mist was beginning to crowd down the mountainside. Rainier's fog-wreath was swiftly growing into a blanket. He must hurry back to camp before the swirls blinded the trail.

He hurried, but the mist drove swiftly down. The terror of Rainier chilled him faintly as he leaped and slid along his snow trail. He was safe. All he needed to do was to keep going down. There were no treacheries of ice and rock ahead of him as he remembered them behind him yesterday. Yet he felt small, alone, and in need of human friendship. Fanny, good old scout, would be out on the trail, he would wager, looking for him. He would be glad to see her.

EVEN as he thought of her, a figure evolved out of the thickening mist ahead. Short, stocky, trousered, it should have been, but was not. Rathbun, as he slid toward it, brushed his hand across his eyes. It was an extraordinary figure. What in the world? No? Yes! It wore a skirt. As he got within ten yards, he saw that it wore a silk skirt, once white, now snow-soaked and gray to the waist. There was a Georgette crêpe waist to accompany this skirt, and a glorified kind of silk sweater. Once they had been pink. Evidently the wearer had fallen, elbow-deep, in snow many times. The pink things were soaked rags. Rathbun had time to see this and the smart wet oxfords before he said:

"Great Scott!"

"Am I near the inn?" asked the figure in the voice of one who had been crying.

"Inn!" said Rathbun. "Good heavens, no! What are you doing here?"

The figure sniffed. "I came out for a walk. I'm so cold." And she frankly sobbed. "And wet." She blew ner nose with a soaked handkerchief.

"I'll get you back. It's an hour's hike. Are you good for it?"

"An hour!" The figure broke into a wail. "Oh, I can't walk three minutes!"

"Well, you've got to," said Rathbun shortly. "Fall in. Step in my steps. And keep right up. Ready."

He went ahead, shortening his stride to the limitations of the white silk skirt. As he walked, he grinned. He had known her after the first bewildered instant. She was the Billy Wessings' friend. She couldn't possibly know him. His face was black to the ears. His lips were swollen with sunburn. Around his neck was a red bandanna. He looked like a stage villain. He was safe enough in his disguise to behave exactly as he liked.

As he picked his way carefully through the snow, the things he would like to say to her assembled themselves in his mind. For two weeks he had not seen a girl who asked his help. The girls in camp had carried their own packs, put calks in their own shoes, played the man at every turn. Feminine appeal had been mercifully spared him for fourteen wholesome days. He would like to tell this apparition in silk and gauze just how much the sight of her, the thought of her whole type, bored him. Why couldn't girls of her kind learn to look life in the eye?

He thought of Fanny's candid gaze and yearned for her. A faint, smothered cry halted his crunching stride. He looked back. The pink sweater was not to be seen.

"Where are you!" he called, real terror and definite rage in his voice. It would be just like the Billy Wessings' friend to break a bone out here, a mile from everybody.

A cry, faint and smothered, came to him out of the drifting fog. Rathbun stepped back carefully in his own footprints. He had stepped thirty of them before he saw a hole in the snow some ten feet distant from the trail.

"Are you hurt?" he called down into the hole. She had gone out of his path and had fallen into a blind crevasse. There weren't supposed to be any at this level. It couldn't be very deep. Perhaps ten or twelve feet. Probably there was soft snow at the bottom.

"How deep are you? What made you get off the trail?" he demanded, his black face peering through the hole.

"Please get me out of here," came a little voice. "I'm so cold and wet."

"What made you get off the trail I made for you?" he said again, this time savagely. "Don't you know you've no business to mess things up for other people? What are you doing up here, anyway, in that rig? I suppose you'll go home now and have pneumonia, and make as much of a nuisance of yourself as you can. That's all women of your sort ever do make of themselves."

To his surprise the voice that answered him from the darkness was neither little nor wailing.

"If you care whether or not I get the benefit of your views on women, you had better get me up where I can hear them. Can you let me have a rope or something?"

Rathbun sulkily was unwrapping his puttees.

"You think when you stick on a gauze waist and a pair of low shoes and go out on a mountain for a walk you're doing something sweet and appealing. Well, I'll tell you for the good of your own soul that it may have appealed to somebody somewhere once. But he died of boredom in the Victorian age. The people who look good to us live mortals have to look good for something. Put this loop over your head, fasten it under your arms. Take hold. Dig in with your toes, and I'll help you climb up."

HE threw his looped puttee-end down at her. There was some gasping from below and scrambling. He hauled in his end. In a moment she stood beside him. As practised readers of fiction know, she should at this point, have fallen into his arms and fainted or wept. He was prepared for either. Whichever she did, he meant to shake her. She blew her nose and peered about. Then she sneezed.

"When I started out from the inn this morning," she said thickly, "I thought maybe I might meet a bear. I certainly have."

She sneezed again.

"There are all kinds of creatures on these mountains," he returned, "even geese."

He reefed his end of the knotted puttees about his fist.

"Just to make sure that you stay on the trail," he said, "we'll keep tied together. We're not half an hour from the inn. Ready! Step exactly in my footprints."

He led her down to the level automobile road where at last he undid the leash by which he had secured her. She limped beside him, an occasional sneeze punctuating

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her silence. Rathbun took her to the very foot of the inn steps.

"I suppose it's safe," he said, "to leave you here." He hesitated. Should he be as insulting as he longed to be? He took a deep breath and thought of Hill. Hill, now, would speak his mind, crudely, healthily.

"You've not been in any danger this morning," he said, breathing hard. "Except from yourself. The crime on the mountain is to go on it unprepared. The second crime is to make trouble for other people. You're a Western girl. Why don't you know these things? I've been living for two weeks with men and women who do. Why don't you get on to the fact that you're living in a real world? They have."

The Billy Wessings' friend sneezed. "I'b sorry I've cost you so buch trouble," she said hoarsely. "But I've surely given you a wonderful opportudidy to speak your bide."

She sneezed again, and went up the hotel steps.

"Don't let them baby you, now, when you get in there," he sent after her. "Take a hot bath and a hot drink, and put on some sensible clothes, if you have any."

He pulled Hill's hat down over his eyes, and strode away on his hob-nails. If she had a reply, as he supposed she had, he at least could not hear it.

The Antelopes broke camp the next day. Rathbun found himself loping down the trail he had climbed so painfully two weeks ago. Its miles were nothing to him today. He sang as he strode.

"Good-by, old friend!" he thought as he looked his last on the mountain. "Wait for me. I'll come again!"

Fanny, at his side, spoke his thoughts. "It's fine, isn't it, to think of her, always there waiting! Life is such a mess, sometimes. But when it is messiest, there's always the mountain, back in one's mind, a vast reality, behind everything. I like to remember it."

Rathbun smiled at her. "So do I," he said, "thanks to you."

Fanny was on her way down to a very messy case. She had told him about it. She would spend the next weeks with a hopelessly pain-racked woman. He could imagine what comfort and courage Fanny would share with her.

As they walked, their trail crossed the automobile road. A limousine purred down in front of them. In it sat a magnificent chauffeur and a woman's figure bundled to the eyes. As the limousine slid smoothly past, Rathbun distinctly heard the bundle sneeze.

THE next night he was once again in the excellent club. It was a sticky night, at the end of what had been a sticky August. He met Hill and found him to be a one-lunged giant with an impediment in his speech and a tendency to blush. Hill had spent a hot two weeks in town, having, as he explained, his face recarpentered. He had a wretched siege still ahead of him. Rathbun inadequately, as he knew, painted his gratitude for the use of his admirable outfit. Looking at his blushing benefactor, he did not tell him of the rugged Westerner he had let himself become inside Hill's shirt. As Hill lisped and stammered through a jocular description of two weeks' toothache in August, Rathbun thought of the Billy Wessings' girl. Hill would have been gentleness itself with that young person. He remembered his violence, and a slow, hot flush began to creep up from the back of his neck, and overspread his face. He laid a hand on Hill's arm.

"Sorry," he said. "I catch the midnight train. And I've a call to make."

"Call?" Tom Hoffman, smoking luxuriously in one of the deep chairs, remembered. "Sure enough. Well, it'll be a better call, just as I told you!"

A half-hour later Rathbun, festively garbed, spent a few moments at the telephone. The Billy Wessings' friend was delighted to hear that he was still in town. She had been away herself, and was afraid he would have flitted. Yes, she would be happy to see him, if he wouldn't mind her having a frightful cold. No, not serious. Only annoying. She had been doing some mountain climbing, and had suffered a little from exposure. Yes, she would love to tell him all about it.

Rathbun fingered the receiver a moment. What would she tell him, he wondered? Unprotected by grease-paint, and back once more in the garments of diplomacy, what would he say to her? His incognito had been perfect. Would he emerge? With women of her type it was best to be prepared.

On his way to call upon the Billy Wessings' girl he stopped at a florist's to send an imposing offering to Fanny. Something sturdy and reliable, he felt it ought to be. Cheerful, too. Zinnias were his final choice. He sent them to her, with affectionate gratitude inscribed upon his card. She would put them, he knew, in her patient's room. He could bank on that. Good old, kind, reliable Fanny!

Then, his hat at a cheerful angle, he went upon his way. A smile was on his lips. If the Billy Wessings' girl embroidered her story, he knew just what he meant to say. How would she look when he mentioned details of her mountain costume? The smile on his lips grew cynical as he admitted to himself that the story the Billy Wessings' friend would tell him, the game she would play, the snares she would set for him, amused him. And it would amuse him to play his hand at her game. As he hurried up her steps, the angle of his hat was even a trifle reckless.

Yet a few minutes later, in the shadowed lights of a fragrant room, as her small hand lay in his, and her long-fringed eyes looked up at him, his heart misgave him, and he heard himself saying the unreasonable, the unforeseen.

"I've come to apologize." It was his own undoubted voice that spoke, as, red with shame, he faced her. A dimple hovered, then vanished from the corner of her mouth.

"I was a brute to you," he said thickly, "that day on the mountain. I was that bear you met." He even wondered if he were about to offer to make his whole life an atonement.

The dimple hovered, then permanently rested at the corner of what he now knew to be a perfect mouth. She sighed, and the long-fringed lashes lifted themselves once more.

"And Fanny had written me that you were next to the nicest man in the whole world!"

"Fanny!" he echoed fatuously.

The little figure, all foolish Georgettes and useless silks, sat demurely in a big chair and dimpled at him.

"You see, she is to be married to a Mr. Hill this winter. You took his outfit. And she wanted me to hurry up to the inn so she could exhibit you. I didn't explain about having met you. I'd have been in camp with you, only I've been getting over an appendix for a month or so."

"Yes," said Rathbun, stupidly. "I see."

"She had sent me dozens of snap-shots of you in Mr. Hill's outfit. So I knew you right away. I was so sorry about your poor foot."

Rathbun, putting his head in his hands, frankly groaned. "Be merciful," he begged.

There was a short silence.

"I used to be terribly silly when you knew me before," the charming voice went on. "And I was terribly anxious to show you how wonderful I had become. Then, when I got up there that morning, the sun was so beautiful, and I felt so glad! I didn't realize that I wasn't really strong. So I went out for a little walk, went too far, got in the fog—and oh, wasn't it sickening to have you see me in those ridiculous clothes?"

"Please!" said Rathbun. He now knew that she had staggered into that crevasse from weakness. And he had bullied her.

"Brute! Abysmal!" he moaned. They looked at each other miserably. Then she laughed, an enchanting laugh, like sudden sun through fog.

"It's wonderful country, isn't it?" she said. "I've climbed the mountain once. But I want to go again. Fanny says I may do it next summer, with her and Mr. Hill. You'd better—" the voice stopped. Rathbun raised haggard eyes, in which hope struggled.

"Could I? Would you let me?" She smiled at him. It was a kind smile. If there were a hint of malice in it, it was a tempered malice, heavenly feminine.

"You would have time to buy yourself an outfit," she told him, "much better than Mr. Hill's. Let me tell you exactly what to have."

HE hung enthralled upon her every word. By eleven forty-five there had even been an exchange of words between them in which it was clear that he was forgiven, that he had never for one moment thought her clothes ridiculous, that they would go over it all next summer with Fanny and Mr. Hill. He told her, during the exchange of words, a surprising number of things: for example, that he had not wanted to call at first. Tom Hoffman had told him to make the two weeks' camping trip, and that then it would be a better call.

"And was it?" she asked, the fringing lashes rising and falling once.

"A better call?" He hung over her little hand. "A better call?" he echoed. "It was the most remarkable call that ever happened in this world."

The taxi driver here honked three ruthless honks.

One last word he felt that he must say, just at the door. "Although I suspect that with practise I can make even better ones."

As the taxi whirled him to the midnight train, he tried to vizualise in the dark the dimple that had hovered at that, and then remained.

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UNDER THE SPREADING CHESTNUT TREE

THERE'S a suburban home whose owner's principal delight is in keeping it spick and span. After dinner he and a guest were smoking on the front lawn. The guest, after lighting his cigar, threw the burned match to the ground.

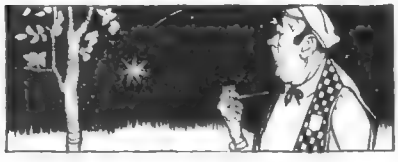
"Oh, I wouldn't do that, George!" said the host.

"Why not?" asked the guest, surprised.

"It spoils the appearance of a place," was the answer; "it's just those little things that make a place look bad."

The guest smoked his cigar in silence for a minute. Then, without a word, he got up from his chair, walked down to the road and disappeared. He returned in a short while and his host asked: "Why, where have you been, George?"

"Oh, I just went down to spit in the river," said George.



THE new night watchman at the college had noticed some one using the big telescope. Just then a star fell.

"Begorra," said the watchman, "that felly sure is a crack shot!"

JIMMIE was visiting his aunt. There was a long delay in serving dinner, and Jimmie's impatience finally became so marked that his aunt noticed it.

"Jimmie, are you sick?" she inquired.

"No," said Jimmie, rubbing his stomach, "but my stomach is running on new time now and your dinner isn't."

PRIVATE JONES, a stenographer before the war, had caught the bullet which he thought would send him West. He motioned to the stretcher-bearer.

"Give my love to Dorothy and tell her that I thought only of her to the end," he begged. "Carbon copies to Frances and Anna and Grace."

A BUSINESS man advertised for an office boy.

The next morning there were some fifty boys in line.

He was about to begin examining the applicants when his stenographer handed him a card on which was scribbled:

"Don't do anything until you see me. I'm the last kid in line, but I'm telling you I'm there with the goods."

EDITOR'S NOTE—Though the sign is the Chestnut Tree, no story is barred by its youth. We will gladly pay for usable ones. Address all manuscripts to "The Chestnut Tree," enclosing stamped, addressed envelope.

THE ladies were talking in the humorously indulgent way in which they usually tackle the topic of husbands.

"John is perfectly helpless without me," said Mrs. A. "I don't know what would become of him if I left him for a week."

"Isn't it the truth!" sighed Mrs. C. "You'd think my husband was a child the way I have to take care of him. Why, whenever he is mending his clothes or sewing on buttons or even darning his socks, I always have to thread the needle for him!"

DONALD MACTAVISH lay a-dying. He had been all day about it, and his wife, who had watched with patient expectancy since early morn, began to feel the call of her neglected household duties.

"Aweell, Don," she said, as she moved the light to the table by his bed, "I mus' gang along to the kitchen the noo. Ye'll no be takin' yer departure afore I come back. But if ye should, ye'll not forget to blow out the candle afore ye dee, will ye?"

TEACHER—"The centaur was a creature with the head and arms of a man and the body of a horse."

BILLY (of the grammar-school nine): "Gee! What a combination for battin' and base-runnin'."

MRS. SMITH was suing her husband for divorce and the judge was trying to get at the reasons.

"I called her a liar, Judge," spoke up Mr. Smith, seemingly unashamed.

Mrs. Smith then set off on a vehement denial; in fact she put it a little too strong and the judge began to wonder.

"I tell you what I'll do," he stated. "We'll have a compromise in this case. Every time your husband is absolutely sure that you have deceived him he can put a scratch on the piano. That will——"

"No, you don't, Judge!" screamed Mrs. Smith. "I'm not going to have my piano ruined."

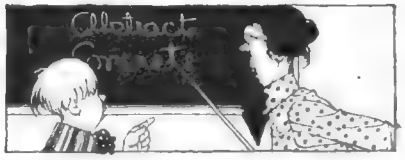
A VERY nervous man visited a famous nerve specialist for treatment.

"Do you drink much coffee?" asked the doctor.

"About four saucers full," answered the patient.

"Why don't you drink out of a cup?"

"Because when I do the spoon gets in my eye."



TEACHER was explaining to the class the difference between "abstract" and "concrete" and was endeavoring to make her explanation very simple and clear.

"Now," she said, "concrete is something you can see, and abstract is something you can not see."

Willie looked quite enlightened, so teacher ventured to test her explanation. "Willie," she said, "give me an example of something concrete."

"My trousers," was Willie's response.

"Correct," said teacher, gratified; "and now something abstract."

"Yours."

PETE LOWER was digging away at the weeds in his potato patch.

"Makes it harder to have the weeds so thick, don't it?" remarked Lem Beebe, leaning over the fence.

"Nope; easier," declared Pete; "you don't have to walk so far to the next weed."

A FISHERMAN sat in the shadow of a stone wall on the bank of a creek, patiently waiting for a fish to take the bait. Just above a sign on the wall which read "Insane Asylum" sat another man just as patiently watching him. Finally he asked:

"Caught anything?"

"No."

"Had any bites?"

"No."

"How long you been fishing?"

"Three or four hours."

"Come on over on this side."

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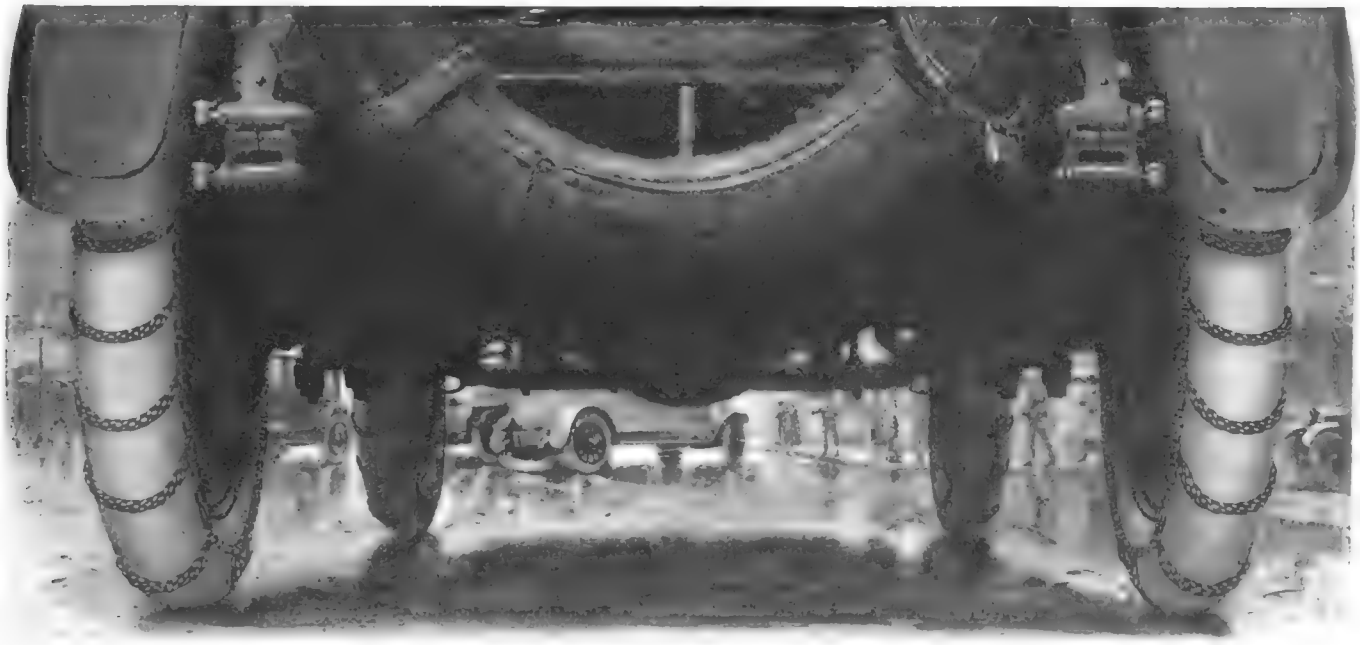

Dependable Protection for Pedestrians and Car Owners

Weed Tire Chains

It seems unfair that a few careless owners and drivers who do not use Weed Tire Chains should imperil pedestrians and others who use this reasonable precaution to prevent skidding accidents.

When an automobile skids on a crowded thoroughfare it is more of a danger to other vehicles and persons than to itself and its occupants.

There is nothing so maddening or so nerve racking as to have another motorist skid into you imperiling the lives of your passengers and smashing your car, especially when you know *it could have been prevented* by the use of Weed Tire Chains.

Some of the larger cities are greatly agitated over the skidding menace and committees have been formed *to draft stringent ordinances* for the protection of pedestrians and road users.

It is high time that careful, sane motorists adopt some means to protect themselves and pedestrians and prevent the awful loss of life and property caused by skidding.

The courts should not regard skidding as an unavoidable accident when Weed Tire Chains, *the proven device for preventing it,* are so easily available and at so reasonable a price.

See that you do not lay *yourself* open to severe criticism. Always put on *your* Weed Tire Chains when the roads are slippery and uncertain.

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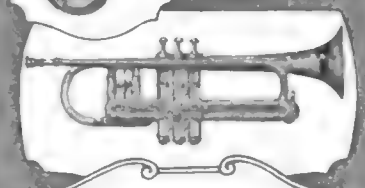

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I'LL SHOW YOU THE TOWN

(*Continued from page 61*)

on the arm of his chair singing a song that does its best to throb with passion, there are those who will entertain unworthy suspicions.

The ghosts of the dead Deuprees were claiming the privilege of passing judgment on my charmingly sentimental party, on the chivalrous Gaylord impulse that had led me to offer the shelter of my roof to a lady in distress. It was chivalrous, it was in the best traditions of the Blue-Grass State; but after her reminder of the way we used to get caught making love in the old days I was beginning to feel that this episode might conceivably become the occasion of regrettable misunderstanding.

STILL, it was pretty dark. But just then one of the searchlights swept along the wall and blinded us for a moment; it flooded the whole apartment with light, and Lucile got up hastily and sat down away from the window. I experienced a sense of relief, and reminded her that it must be time for me to be leaving if I wanted to get back to Maplecrest.

"Oh, what a shame, Alec! Can't you stay a little longer? When does your train go?"

I looked at my time-table—looked at it two or three times to make sure I wasn't mistaken.

"It doesn't seem to go on Sundays," I said. "Seven-twenty is the last one."

"Oh," said Lucile. "Then you can't go up to-night! Well, that's rather nice; it doesn't spoil our evening."

"No," I admitted, "it doesn't spoil our evening. But it may spoil some other things. I wonder— Why, of course! Why didn't I think of that?"

"Think of what?"

"We haven't the price of a hotel room for me between us," I explained. "But Billy Bonner, just across the hall, is a friend of mine. He'll put me up overnight. And he usually carries several hundred dollars around with him, so he can cash a check and I can lend you enough to keep you going."

"Will he be at home on Sunday night? I mean, till terribly late?"

"He may be; he's a man of most irregular habits. Yes, that helps matters immeasurably. I might have found it hard to get money at Maplecrest, and the bank wouldn't have been open by the time I have to leave in the morning."

"Why do you have to go so early?" Lucile demanded. "There are still lots and lots of things that I want to ask you. Can't you stay and have breakfast with me, and go up later?"

Well, of course I could wait for the noon train. But I felt that one thing at a time was all that I could handle. I'd have to break my appointment with Hazel anyway, as a matter of precaution; but if I lingered with Lucile there was no telling when I'd get started. And there was no point in allowing Agnes to think thoughts longer than was necessary.

"No, I have to get away early," I said. "Now I'd be glad to have you stay here all week——"

"Well? Of course if you get me some money I can go to a hotel to-morrow, but——"

"I think you'd better," I said. "I'd forgotten, but I'd invited some people to tea on Tuesday, and they might not understand."

"Then I'll get out to-morrow morning," said Lucile, "and hunt up some quiet little hotel. Only I hope you'll let me come back to your tea?"

"My dear," I said nervously, "you'd be bored to death. They won't be very interesting people."

"Oh," she sniffed, "if you don't want me to come— But I thought it would be nice to begin meeting people right away; I want to get acquainted in New York, you know."

What could I say? The safest way out seemed to be to assure her that I'd be delighted to have her among those present, and to-morrow I could think up some excuse for calling the whole thing off.

"You're a dear," she said, and yawned through her smile. I realized that she had had a hard day and that I'd better hunt up Bonner. And when I told her so, her protests were so drowsy that she had to laugh at them herself.

"Sleep late," I advised her. "I'll slip the money under your door, and see you at five on Tuesday. But try not to remember where things are in the apartment; we don't want to rouse any suspicions, you know."

"All right," she smiled. "Good night, Alec. And—thank you so much, dear boy."

There was an awkward pause. I didn't particularly want to kiss her, and I suppose she didn't want to kiss me, but each of us was afraid of disappointing the other. So we came together, and just as our lips met my door-bell clattered with such infernal suddenness that we let go of each other and sprang six feet apart.

"We're always getting caught," she wailed.

WITH an effort I recovered my nerve; the vindictive husband couldn't be so close on her trail. I pushed her back into the living-room, switched off the light, and opened the door. It was Bonner, dusty and begrimed.

"Say, doc—" he began; and then a white glare from that miserable searchlight swept through the whole place, and Bonner looked over my shoulder and perceived a beautiful brunette—a very beautiful brunette—with a yellow kimono and disheveled hair, trying to find a place to hide.

"Excuse me," he said with emphasis. "Didn't mean to butt in."

No Deupree could endure a misunderstanding like that; and besides, Lucile's name had to be protected. I dragged him across the threshold and turned the light on.

"Don't be a fool," I snarled. "It isn't that at all. I want you to meet the lady who has sublet my apartment."

As I said it I felt that the explanation was not all that might be required; ladies who sublet apartments do not usually entertain their landlords with kimono parties. And Lucile broke in hastily——

"It isn't exactly that, you see. But Doctor Deupree and I are old friends, and

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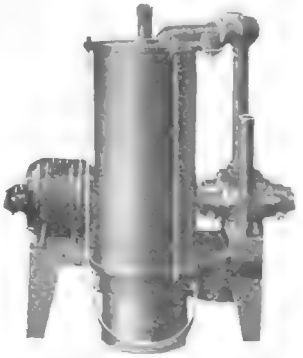
Easily installed in *old* or *new* Residences, Churches, Schools, etc. Made mounted on wheels for Factories, Office Buildings, Theatres, Large Stores, etc. Send for illustrated catalog showing its construction and labor saving uses.



Machine is set in basement or side room. A suction pipe runs to each floor.

AMERICAN RADIATOR COMPANY

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Makers of the world-famous IDEAL Boilers and AMERICAN Radiators

A PENNY A DAY PIPES THE DUST AWAY

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Bon Voyage!

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These cheques have served on the seven seas and are known on every continent. At home and abroad, wherever presented, they are readily cashed and possess all the advantages of currency but are safer and more convenient.

THROUGH the Bankers Trust Company's foreign service arrangements have been made so that travelers holding "A·B·A" Cheques may exchange them, on arrival in Europe, for other "A·B·A" Cheques stamped with their equivalent in sterling, francs or lire, etc., based upon the current exchange rate.

"A·B·A" Cheques are issued in denominations of $10, $20, $50 and $100, and are put up in convenient leather wallets —at almost any bank in the United States and Canada.

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BANKERS TRUST COMPANY
New York City

I've just come to New York and had no place to go——"

Apparently this was no better, to judge from Bonner's expression of why-think-it-necessary-to-keep-up-pretenses-with-me-I-too-am-human.

"She's here for only a few days," I cried frantically. "And I want to spend the night with you, if you don't mind. A motor party is calling for me in the morning, and I'll have to get up earlier than——"

And this was no better. Lucile's nerves had stood many strains that day, and at last they snapped. Bonner had hardly begun some reassuring remark when she broke out with a petulant, hysterical——

"Oh, go away! Go away! I hate you both!"

"All right," I agreed. "You're all tired out. And I'll leave the money in the morning."

And the consciousness that even this remark had a guilty ring kept me silent till Bonner had shut his door behind us.

"HAVIN' a little fuss?" he inquired. "Well, Doc, you'll find they're pretty much all alike."

"Bonner," I said earnestly, "for God's sake let me explain. You are thinking things that—that have no justification, about a woman who is absolutely spotless. It's an unfortunate affair. This girl is an old friend of mine. She's just left her husband, and since she was broke and had no place to go I offered her a—a home for a few days, till she can get herself settled. And of course I want to avoid the least appearance——"

"Ah, I see. Yes, Doc, you're right about that. As long as she's got the goods on her husband there's no use pullin' anything that would look bad in a counter suit. Particularly for a man with your job. You don't want to get mixed up in it any more than you can help, till she's all clear. Of course you can usually get away with murder in these apartment-houses, but you don't want to take too big a chance. Well, Doc, I'll go on the stand and swear I never saw the least thing suspicious. You can count on me to the limit."

"Some day," I said gently, "I am going to explain. But not to-night. It will take a week. Just at present all I ask is that you put me up overnight, and cash a check for a hundred dollars."

"I can do that. More if you want it."

So I took a hundred for Lucile and fifty for myself, and I put her money in an envelope, slipped it under my own door, and came back and set Bonner's alarm-clock for half-past seven.

"I ought to lend you some money," he said, "for I made a sale to-day, thanks to you."

"Miss Deming?"

"The same. The blue-eyed bearcat, I believe the papers call her; and she is all of that. Had her and her hard-faced friend out on Long Island in the touring-car all afternoon; and she mails me a check in the morning. But believe me, Doc, this day pretty nearly saw the last of yours truly."

"Did Sarah talk you to death?"

"Talk me to death from the back seat of a car that was doin' seventy-five most of the time, with me in front? No, Doc, she spent all her time holdin' on, and thought she was damn lucky to do that. But this

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girl— Ever hear of Axel Hammarstrom, the big Swede that lives down at Cedarhurst?"

"I've heard the name, but I can't remember——"

"They call him the Headless Horseman of the Merrick Road. He drives a big racin' car, and thinks his honor's hurt if he does under sixty. Delights in turnin' corners at his best speed without lookin' to see if anybody's in the way, holds the middle of the road and makes other people climb fences. Oh, he's a devil; he's got everybody scared. Been in six or seven smashes, but somehow he hangs on to his license and stays out of jail.

"Well, we was runnin' along the Merrick Road at something over seventy, with the girl at the wheel—nice long stretch ahead of us—when I see something comin' toward us. One look, and I knew him; he drove one of my demonstrators into a tree a couple of years ago, smashed a car and blew us to about eight hundred dollars' hospital bills. Well, I was scared; I don't mind tellin' you. When that bird is out on the road I want to be in the surf at Long Beach.

" 'Look out for him,' I says to the girl. 'That's Hammarstrom.' 'Who's Hammarstrom?' she says. 'He's a big Swede that thinks he owns the road,' I says, 'and it takes a better man than me to say he doesn't. He always drives in the middle of the road and lets other people wonder if they're goin' to jump the ditch or turn turtle. He's killed three or four already. Better gimme the wheel and I'll stop and turn out.'

"Did she give me the wheel? Not her! By this time Hammarstrom was gettin' close—both of us doin' over seventy.

" 'Killed three or four already, has he?' she says. 'Well, well, well! Thinks the road belongs to him, does he? We'll see about that.' And with that she turns right into the middle and drives straight at him—aimin' right between his front wheels. Doc, I thought I was gone; I could hear 'em singin' 'Lead, Kindly Light.' I don't know what the Swede thought, but that girl went right for him; and about a hundred feet away he lost his nerve and spun his wheel out and jumped the ditch. There was nothin' but a barbed wire fence in his way, the lucky devil; and the last I saw over my shoulder he was hoppin' across a hay-field on two wheels with some chance of gettin' stopped before he spilled himself. And this mild little friend of yours only says, 'Well, I guess he'll give other people some of the road after this.' "

I picked up his telephone.

"And she was going to drive me up into Westchester to-morrow!" I sighed. "Well, you may not believe it, but I was going to call it off anyway."

I GOT the Plaza; I called Hazel's apartment. But it was Mrs. Whitlow's voice that answered.

"The child's asleep," she said in a tone which indicated that she had been. "Do you think I'm goin' to wake her up for you? Not much, young man."

"Well, then," I said desperately, "tell her I can't——"

There was a click in my ear; Sarah had hung up the receiver. I considered; then I jiggled the hook till the hall-boy on night duty answered me.

Knitting Mills **Cotton Mills**

Needed in St. Louis

THERE are unusual opportunities in St. Louis for knitting mills and cotton mills. The immense market in the great St. Louis trade territory, the nearness to raw materials, the rail and water shipping facilities meet the requirements for the successful manufacture and distribution of knit goods and textiles. The annual sales of drygoods in St. Louis total more than $200,000,000.

St. Louis is close to the center of the cotton supply. The Mississippi River gives an unlimited water supply. Abundant hydro-electric current is obtained from the Keokuk Dam. One twentieth of all of the coal mined in the world is mined within 100 miles of St. Louis. The female labor supply is approximately 53,000. A St. Louis bleachery, now in operation, has capacity for the output of several mills. The climatic conditions are excellent.

Textile manufacture is one of the following sixteen industries St. Louis is seeking:

Shoe laces and findings
Cotton spinning and textile mills
Dye stuffs
Steel and copper wire
Machine tools and tool machinery
Automobile accessories and parts
Drop forge plants
Tanneries and leather products
Malleable iron castings
Farm implements
Rubber products
Screw machine products
Locomotive works
Blast furnaces
Cork products
Small hardware

The booklet, "St. Louis as a Manufacturing Center," gives details that will interest you. A letter will bring it. Address

Director New Industries Bureau
St. Louis Chamber of Commerce
St. Louis, U. S. A.

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Is Very Easy to Get, If You Go About It in the Right Way

You have often heard of others who doubled and trebled their salaries in a year's time. You wondered how they did it. Was it a pull? Don't you think it. When a man is hired he gets paid for exactly what he does, there's no sentiment in business. It's preparing for the future and knowing what to do at the right time that doubles and trebles salaries.

Remember When You Were a Kid

and tried to ride a bike for the very first time? You thought that you would never learn and then—all of a sudden you knew how, and said in surprise: "Why it's a cinch if you know how." It's that way with most things, and getting a job with big money is no exception to the rule, if you know how.

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Without loss to you of a single working hour, we can show you a sure way to success and big pay. A large number of men in each of the positions listed are enjoying their salaries because of our help—we want to help you. Make check on the coupon against the job you want and we will help you get it. Write or print your name on the coupon and send it in today.

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I want job checked — tell me how to get it.

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.....Civil Engineer $5,000 to $15,000	.....Steam Engineer $2,000 to $4,000
.....Structural Engineer $4,000 to $10,000	.....Foreman's Course $2,000 to $4,000
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.....Certified Public Accountant $7,000 to $15,000	.....Sanitary Engineer $2,000 to $5,000
.....Accountant & Auditor $2,500 to $7,000	.....Telephone Engineer $2,500 to $5,000
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.....Electrical Engineer $4,000 to $10,000	.....High School Graduate In two years
.....General Education In one year	.....Fire Insurance Expert $3,000 to $10,000

Name.....

Address.....

"Walter," I said, "this is Doctor Deupree. You'll have a call for me in the morning. Send it to Mr. Bonner's apartment; mine is sublet. Be sure not to make any mistake. Mr. Bonner—118."

"Yes, sir. I'll do that, sir."

Bonner, winding his watch, grinned at me.

"They're a hell of a nuisance, ain't they, doc?"

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Improvisations in B Sharp

IN THE cool dimness of morning I opened my eyes in a room that I was too drowsy to identify, and lay for a while in delightful ease, not knowing or caring how I had been awakened—only wondering lazily where I was. Presently I remembered asking Bonner for shelter; then this must be Bonner's apartment, and across the airshaft on which the window opened was my own——

At this point I became conscious of the faint, insistent ringing of a bell beyond the airshaft. There was something familiar about its sound; and now I dimly remembered another bell that had tinkled near me, some time ago, and brought me to half wakefulness. It ought to have reminded me of something, I knew; but I was too confortably half asleep to wonder what, or to try to find a meaning in the intermittent remarks of a peevish, sleepy voice that came to my ears from across the airshaft.

"Hello . . . . ! Yes—this is Doctor Deupree's apartment. Wha-at. . . ? You want Doctor Deupree. . . ? Who is this, please . . . ? Hazel who . . . ? Hold the wire; I'll see if he's awake."

A door opened, soft-shod feet shuffled in the hallway outside. Then the doorbell of Bonner's apartment rattled like a steam hammer. I woke up suddenly and completely, sprang out of bed, and opened the door.

Lucile stood in the hallway, heavy-eyed and yawning, her feet insecurely shod in slippers that were half fallen off, her yellow negligée hurriedly thrown over her nightgown and held together with a clutching hand. And I suppose I looked fully as slumbrous and irritated as she did, for we glared angrily at each other for a good five seconds before she said:

"Somebody named Hazel says she's waiting for you."

"Why didn't you tell her she had the wrong apartment? She'll think——"

"What do I care what she thinks? I don't know her. Who is Hazel, anyway? And what does she want?"

"She's come to take me up to the conference."

"Oh, she's the party, is she? Well, you might have had her call Bonner, instead of waking me up."

"It was that fool hallboy," I said angrily. "I told Walter to send the call here, but I suppose James is on this morning, and Walter forgot to tell him. Yes, that's it. James is on."

"Everybody in the house will be on if you don't shut up," growled a peevish voice from Bonner's bedroom. "If you've got to fight, go over and fight in your own apartment."

Lucile and I glared at each other with the bitterness of those who have been waked too soon.

"Well?" she demanded. "Are you going to talk to Hazel?"

"No," I barked. "Tell her I'll be down in ten minutes."

Somehow I managed to make my appearance reasonably presentable in ten minutes, but my heart had turned to mush. What would I say to Hazel? No Deupree liked to have anybody misunderstand him; this particular Deupree particularly didn't like to have Hazel misunderstand him. There was something out of the ordinary about her. She deserved an explanation.

But I wasn't good at e planations, and she might give me no chance to explain. She might make some cold, cutting remarks and disappear in a cloud of dust.

And when I came out of the lobby and found the car at the curb, with Sarah, stiff and uncompromising, sticking up out of the little locker behind, where you can take the lid off and find a seat, I gave up hope. If Sarah knew, all was over.

But evidently Sarah didn't know. She nodded stiffly as I passed her and went forward to greet Hazel, like a criminal coming up for sentence.

She was at the wheel, with a tam of dark green whipcord canted down over one ear, and the sleeves of her green silk sweater rolled up to give her muscular arms free play, and as I approached she looked down at me and smiled.

"Hello! It was a shame to get you up so early, wasn't it? How sleepy you look! But on a morning like this you ought to be waked up before we're out of the Bronx."

And that was all, positively all. Uncomprehending, but tremendously relieved, I climbed in beside her. The engine roared, droned, and died away to a stifled hum, the car glided around the corner and started northward with a great leap.

OUR party proceeded in a heavy silence. Sarah was safely hidden away in the rear; anything she might have said was swept away by the wind. I thought the longer I could keep silent the better, and Hazel was too busy with getting the car through the city streets at a highly illegal speed to pay much attention to anything else. She slowed down again and again for groups of children who refused to scatter at the sound of the horn, but she made up for it by passing everything on wheels, mounting to a glorious climax at the city line when a motorcycle policeman who drove toward us, stop-watch in hand, was distanced by the unleashing of a tremendous reserve of power and left out of sight in five minutes.

"Of course he got the number," she observed when we were safely away and slowing down to something like forty miles an hour. "I suppose that will cost me twenty-five dollars to-morrow. But we might as well start the day right."

"I trust you wouldn't consider it out of order to stop for breakfast before long," I suggested.

"Oh, you poor thing! Haven't you had anything to eat? Sarah and I breakfasted before we started. But of course—your sister said you were asleep when I called."

My heart gave one big thump of joy. And then for a moment the angels and devils—the Deuprees and the Gaylords—fought for my soul. The sister idea, said the Tempter, was wonderful luck; I ought to take it up and play it hard. But I had scruples of conscience about that; I didn't like to lie to Hazel. Besides, she'd find

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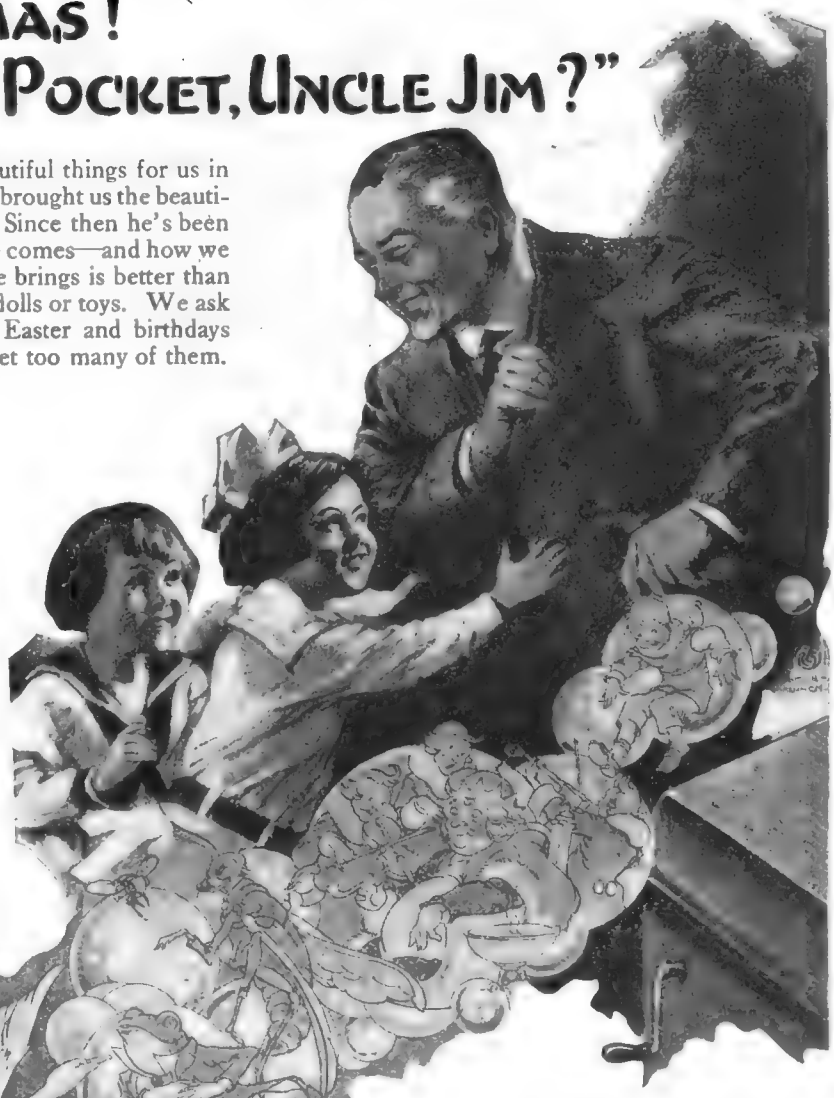
"Merry Christmas! What's In Your Pocket, Uncle Jim?"

UNCLE JIM always has such beautiful things for us in his pocket—but last Christmas he brought us the beautifulest of all. It was a Bubble Book. Since then he's been bringing us Bubble Books every time he comes—and how we do wait for Uncle Jim! Each one he brings is better than the last, and ever so much better than dolls or toys. We ask for Bubble Books for Christmas and Easter and birthdays —'n ever'thing, 'cause we just can't get too many of them.

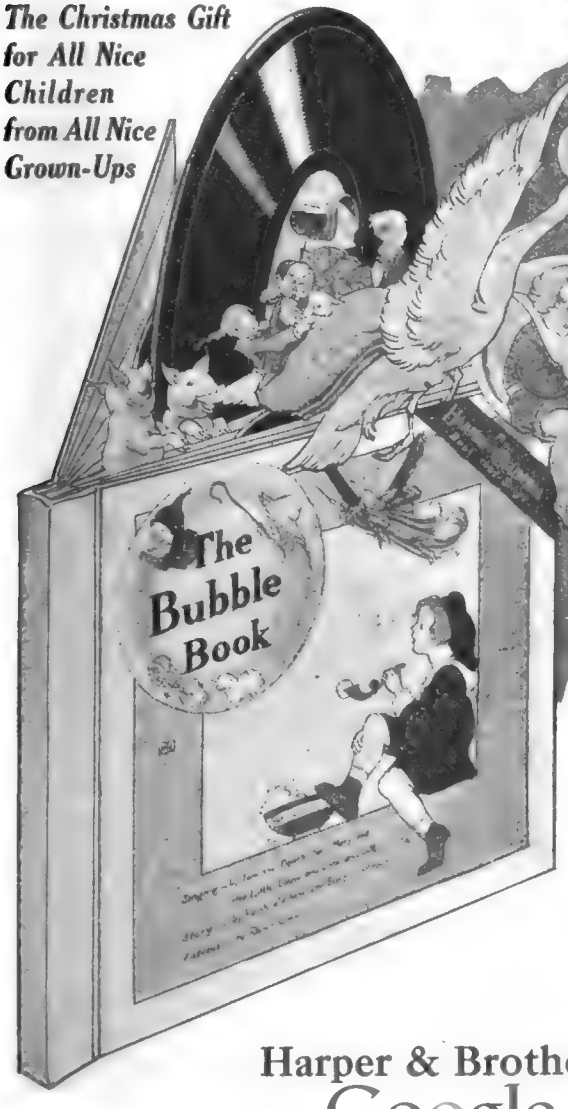


Bubble Books "that Sing"

By Ralph Mayhew and Burges Johnson

Pictures by Rhoda Chase

The Christmas Gift for All Nice Children from All Nice Grown-Ups



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ALL this means—in every-day, grown-up language—that between the pages of these books, in paper pockets made to fit, there are real, sure-enough phonograph records that sing the songs the stories tell about. If your child has a small phonograph of his own, he can play his Bubble Book records on it to his heart's content. If he hasn't, he can play them on your big machine, for any phonograph will play them.

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No. 1—The Bubble Book
Tom, Tom, the Piper's Son Jack and Jill
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Simple Simon Little Bo-Peep Old King Cole

No. 3—The Third Bubble Book
Miss Jennia Jones The Farmer in the Dell
Lazy Mary

No. 4—The Animal Bubble Book
The Three Little Kittens The Three Little Piggies
The Three Blind Mice

No. 5—The Pie Party Bubble Book
Little Jack Horner The Queen of Hearts
Good King Arthur

No. 6—The Pet Bubble Book
Little Pussy Little Doggy Cock-a-Doodle-Doo

No. 7—The Funny Froggy Bubble Book
The Frog Who Would A-Wooing Go
The Frog and the Crow The Carrion Crow

No. 8—The Happy-Go-Lucky Bubble Book
The Milk Maid The Plough Boy
The Jolly Miller

No. 9—The Merry Midgets Bubble Book
Daddy Long-Legs and Floppy Fly The Fly
and the Bumble-Bee The Spider and the Fly

No. 10—The Little Mischief Bubble Book
The Little Girl Who Had a Little Curl
Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be!
Bobby Shaftoe's Gone to Sea

No. 11—The Tippy-Toe Bubble Book
The City Mouse and the Country Mouse
Tabbyskins Old Mother Hubbard

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Smooth as Velvet

Talk about your smooth shaves! These wonderful oil-tempered Durham-Duplex blades are first aid to a sensitive skin. You'll never know the meaning of shaving comfort till you try them. Made from the finest Swedish steel—hollow-ground, double-edged, detachable and guarded. They're the greatest blades ever. You'll say so yourself after the first trial.

DURHAM-DUPLEX
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Standard set, consisting of razor, safety guard and 3 two-edged blades in a durable, sanitary case of American ivory, One Dollar Complete. Other sets $2 to $12.

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out before long that I had no sister; if she didn't know it now. You never could tell about Hazel.

Some sinful Gaylord ghost whispered that I might as well brazen it out. Nobody would believe the truth; so why not accept the romantic and exciting falsehood of appearances? Hazel was a wise young person; she must know that not all of her men friends were rigidly ascetic; why should she expect me to be? She'd never know who the woman was.

But I couldn't do that.

"That wasn't my sister," I said uncomfortably, while the Deupree conscience sat down in triumph and began to sing hymns. "I haven't any sister. That was a girl in hard luck whom I'd sent into my apartment, because she had nowhere else to go. I was staying with Bonner, across the corridor. It's a long story——"

"Don't tell me any more," said Hazel amiably. "That is, don't feel that you have to tell me anything more. I didn't think you were that sort."

"To the pure," I quoted, "all things are pure."

"Not by a good deal," said Hazel promptly. "I'm not pure enough to swallow everything. But I hope I know the difference between some things and other things. And I guess I know you, Alec."

"I think you do," I said presently. "And I want to tell you about it; unless you don't want——"

"Oh, I'm dying with curiosity, of course. Don't tell me anything that's none of my business, or that would hurt anybody else; but I—I didn't know what to think."

SO I told her the story, rather sketchily, and when I had finished she drew a long breath, and looked at me with eyes that were once more alight with the flickering smile.

"I think it was awfully dear of you," she said. "But it was a little awkward, don't you think? Because people would be sure to misunderstand."

"Of course," I explained, "we hadn't counted on a chance for misunderstanding. I didn't expect to miss the train, and—and everything else. Awkward, yes; it was undoubtedly awkward. But we were broke, and when you're broke all kinds of awkward things are likely to happen."

"I know," she said. "I know. We used to be poor. But couldn't you have taken her to Mrs. Torrey's?"

"She's out of town."

"That's so; I forgot. But your other friends?"

"Most of them are out of town. I couldn't call up everybody I knew till I found somebody— Oh, I suppose I could have; but it would have been a lot of trouble. And we never expected complications like this."

"Nobody ever does," said Hazel, "but they do happen. You could have phoned to me. I was out most of the afternoon, but I got in along toward eight. I'd have put her up."

"Yes," I reflected, "I suppose you would. You're that kind. But—I didn't have sense enough to know you're that kind till this morning; I'd hardly have had courage to ask you to entertain my ex-fiancée who'd run away from her husband. Besides, she's a proud little person. I've an idea that she'd rather——"

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"Rather borrow the apartment of a man she knows than accept the hospitality of a woman he knows," Hazel supplied. "Yes. I think I know her. Then she's going away to-day?"

"Yes," I said, "she's going away to-day. Of course, I'll still be her guide, philosopher, and friend——"

"And hero——"

"No, I'm not the hero. I forgot to tell you about that. Apparently she fell in love with some fellow in Chicago last winter. They were both tremendously self-sacrificing; neither would ask the other to give up everything—reputation, and so on. He had the decency to take himself out of her life when everything looked hopeless."

"But now that it looks hopeful you expect him to come back?"

"Well," I suggested, "he'll probably hear about her leaving her husband eventually; and then I suppose he'll write to her, and after she's got her divorce they'll get married."

"And until then?"

"Until then she'll be working at—at something or other. She wants to make her own way. I merely stand by to help her if she needs it. I'd like to see her happy."

"Of course you would," said Hazel. "Well, I'm glad you told me all about it. Though even if you hadn't, I wouldn't have believed there was anything wrong. You're not that kind."

Here was another woman who instinctively trusted me, and for once I was glad of it. It helped things out materially.

BUT Hazel's easy confidence that I couldn't be wicked was balanced by the fact, which became clear shortly afterward, that Sarah distrusted me as much as ever. When we'd run ten or fifteen miles out of town, Hazel charitably decided that she was hungry again, so we turned in at a little roadhouse and breakfasted in a gravelly garden under the trees. Sarah, after her enforced silence on the trip, was full of things that she wanted to say—most of them with a slanting reflection on the character of young men in the effete East; particularly, young men who when called for at the almost meridian hour of eight A.M. are still asleep. I was glad when the check was paid, Sarah's attempt to maneuver me into the back seat was circumvented, and we were once more on the way to Maplecrest.

"You're drivin' a lot too fast," was Sarah's parting caution as we set out. "Twenty miles an hour is a plenty. You hear me, now?"

"I hear her," said Hazel, as we watched the speedometer skipping merrily up through the forties. "Wait till I get my Sagamore; then you'll see some real speed."

"I judge Sarah has already seen it. Bonner told me about your trip yesterday. You little—you little Hazel, don't you know you might have been killed?"

"Not much chance," she said cheerfully. "I didn't think he had any real nerve, and he didn't have. Glad I didn't kill him, though; I'd have got into the papers again, and that's about the first thing I've done since I came to New York that nobody got hold of and printed. But it was hard on Sarah, while it lasted."

"Then there is some hope that when you

Secrets of Selling that Make These Men $10,000 a Year Star Salesmen

Some Amazing Stories of Quick Success

IT is hard to believe that a man who has been working for years in a routine job at small pay could almost overnight step into the $10,000 a year class. Yet that is just what many men have done and are doing today. That such big success could come so quickly and so easily seems almost incredible. If I should tell you that one man who had been a fireman on a railroad stepped from his old job to one that paid him $10,000 a year, you would be inclined to doubt the truth of my statement.

But I can show you the man's own story. And that is only one instance. I can show you many more. Perhaps the most surprising part of it all is that these men were just average men. They came from all walks of life, from all fields of work. They had previously been clerks, bookkeepers, mechanics, farm hands! Some of them had never earned more than $60 a month—some of them had drudged for years at dull, uninteresting work without prospects of anything better in life. And then, in one quick jump, they found themselves earning more money than they had ever thought possible. Suddenly all their dreams of success, position, and finanical independence came true.

Send Me Your Name

I have shown hundreds of men how to step from small-pay jobs into the big money class in one quick jump. $10,000 a year—yes, and more—has come to men as a result of writing to me. Just let me send you the whole amazing proof—entirely free of cost or obligation.

J. E. Greenslade,
President, N. S. T. A.

The Secret of Their Success

WHAT was responsible for their remarkable rise to the ranks of the big money makers? What did they do to lift themselves out of the low pay rut and step to magnificent earnings?

The answer is very simple. These men decided to get into the great field of *Selling*—they learned about the wonderful opportunities in this fascinating profession—why Salesmen are always in demand—why they receive so much more money than men in other fields of Work. And they became Star Salesmen!

Probably if you had told any one of these men that it was possible for him to become a Star Salesman he would have laughed at the idea. If you had told him that it was not only possible, but that it could be done in his spare moments at home, without interfering with his work, he would have dismissed your statement as being too absurd to be even considered. For you must remember that most of those men had never had a day's experience in selling—they had no special qualifications for salesmanship—no thought of ever becoming salesmen.

What Makes a $10,000 a Year Star Salesman?

AS a matter of fact, these men who are today reaping such handsome rewards as Star Salesmen, would probably be working still as clerks, bookkeepers, mechanics, etc., if they had not learned about the National Salesmen's Training Association's system of Salesmanship Training and Free Employment Service. This is an organization of top-notch Salesmen and Sales Managers formed just for the purpose of showing men how to become Star Salesmen and fitting them into positions as City and Traveling Salesmen.

Through its help hundreds of men have been able to realize their dreams of big opportunity, success, wealth and independence. Men without previous experience or special qualifications have learned the secrets of selling, that make Star Salesmen—for salesmen are not "born" but made, and any man can easily master the principles of Salesmanship through the wonderful system of the National Salesmen's Training Association. Anyone who is inclined to doubt that this is so has only to read the stories of men who tell in their own words what the Association has done for them. Here are just a few examples.

J. P. Overstreet, of Dallas, Texas, who was formerly on the Capitol Police Force of Washington, D. C., states: "My earnings for March were over $1,000 and over $1,800 for the last six weeks, while last week my earnings were $356.00. The N. S. T. A. dug me out of the rut where I was earning less than $1,000 a year and showed me how to make a success."

C. W. Campbell, of Greensburg, Pa., writes: "My earnings for the past thirty days are $1,562 and I won Second Prize in March, although I only worked two weeks during that month."

P. T. Balsbaugh, of Pittsburg, Pa., who was formerly a fireman on an Eastern railroad, states: "You have put me in the $10,000 a year class."

What These Men Have Done You Can Do

IT will not cost you a penny to learn how you, too, can become a Star Salesman and take your place among the big money makers of business. Whatever your ambition may be—$5,000 to $10,000 or more a year—find out about *your* great opportunity in the wonderful profession of Salesmanship. See how the N. S. T. A. can open to you the way to a big selling job, to prosperity and a life of fascinating work, travel, and contact with influential men. Just mail the coupon or write, and you will receive without cost or obligation, proof of what the remarkable system of the National Salesmen's Training Association and its FREE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE can do for you. In addition a great book on Salesmanship will be mailed to you without charge. You owe it to yourself to read of the quick and brilliant success that others have achieved and of the opportunities that await you in the wonderful field of Selling. Mail the coupon or write today.

NATIONAL SALESMEN'S TRAINING ASSOCIATION
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National Salesmen's Training Association,
Dept. 34-S, Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

Send me Free Proof that you can make me a Star Salesman and tell me how you will help me land a selling job. Also list showing lines of business with openings for Salesmen. This does not obligate me in any way.

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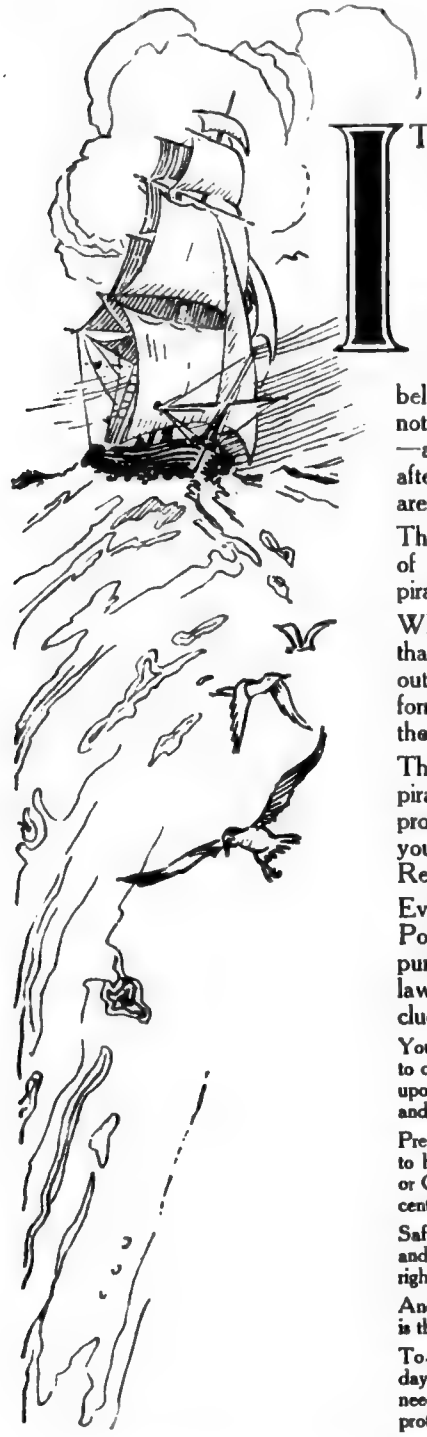

IT IS interesting to-day to read the thrilling tales of Captain Kidd—of that arch-villain Edward Teach—or of such highwaymen as Dick Turpin, picturesque fellows who provide for us tales of romance and adventure, but whose menace in olden days was real and terrifying.

They are no longer to be feared because they belong to a bygone age and their courage has not been passed down to law breakers of to-day—a cowardly crew attacking only the unprotected after providing a quick means of escape. They are called auto bandits.

The automobile affords a quicker and safer means of escape than the old sailing ships in which the pirates carried off their plunder.

While the automobile has opened up highways that would never be traveled, affording pleasurable outings, they have also made it possible for a new form of piracy as difficult to cope with as were the pirates of old.

Those who are molested by these new kind of pirates are the ones who are known to be without protection. And the most perfect protection that you can have is a Colt Automatic Pistol or Colt Revolver.

Every man's duty is to uphold law and order. Police protection is given to run down to a just punishment those who do not; but the arm of the law is not long enough to reach into every secluded corner.

You are expected to render first aid, but you are not expected to do so empty handed. Every citizen must—when called upon—aid the officers of the law, and it is every man's right and privilege to protect his life and property.

Preparedness prevents. And if every household was known to have the splendid protection of a Colt Automatic Pistol or Colt Revolver this preparedness would prevent ninety per cent of household robberies.

Safeguard your motor trips at night and protect your home and property with the splendid protection of "the world's right arm"—a Colt.

And remember that a Colt Automatic Pistol or Colt Revolver is the best that money can buy.

To-day—as in 1836—as in every struggle of arms since that day to this—have the great Colt factories supplied the nation's need—the official side arm of the fighting forces—the national protection of American homes.

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HARTFORD, CONN., U. S. A.

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Colt's Revolvers — Colt's (Browning) Automatic Machine Guns
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COLT'S
FIRE ARMS

get your Sagamore she will not be among those present."

"Not a chance. Wherever duty calls, there's Sarah. I can't say she's very thrilling as a motoring companion, but—Don't you wish we could slip away from her after we get to Maplecrest, and take a long drive up along the river by ourselves?"

Didn't I wish it? I'd do anything for it. But——

"I have an informative speech to deliver to-night," I reminded her. "And in common decency I ought to go to the afternoon session; I've cut everything since the first evening, and as long as I let myself in for this I might as well stick to it. But how about this? I'm second or third on to-night's program. After the afternoon meeting we'll dodge Sarah and drive off some place up the river and have dinner at a roadhouse—they're sprinkled all the way along. And then we can run back in time for my speech. Will that do?"

"It will do," said Hazel. "I'd love it. But what about Mrs. Clevenger?"

Ah, yes. What about Mrs. Clevenger? It was the first time I'd thought of her this morning. I had much to explain; much to make up for. And I hadn't even begun to plan how to do it. I'd have to leave Hazel to herself when we reached Maplecrest, and devote the day to squaring myself. But if I worked hard all afternoon I'd be in a position—assuming that my explanations got over—to steal a couple of hours at dinner-time.

"I don't want to come between you and your duty," Hazel said.

"It seems to me," I discovered, "that I need somebody to come between me and my duty. It is good for me. Now I'll introduce you to one or two intelligent people when I get there—about the only human beings in the place—and then I'll desert you; leave you flat, and lunch with Mrs. Clevenger. These other men will amuse you—I'll guarantee that, and then I'll be able to run away with you for dinner. How about that?"

"That," said Hazel, "sounds like a really brilliant idea. I can take care of myself, even if you can't find anybody that's human. But I do think it's a shame the way people impose on you."

She hadn't seen Agnes, and I wondered what she'd say. This was going to be an afternoon full of trouble, and I suppose I looked my thoughts.

"You poor thing!" she exclaimed. "I should think you'd never want to see a woman again."

"Oh, I rather like it," I assured her. "Only I prefer them one at a time."

"Well, I won't be horrid," she promised. "You take the widow to lunch, and if you're still busy with her at dinner-time you just say so, and we'll let it go."

That was more than Agnes or Lucile would have done.

AND so we drove into the grounds and up the winding drive beneath the maples. The morning session was over; lunch was not yet ready; the wide verandas were thick with speakers, committeemen, delegates, super-delegates and reporters. The green sweater attracted attention; six or seven people stood up to look at us. I peered eagerly—yes—there she was—in a rose frock and a white hat, talking to some other women. But her back was toward

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us. I wondered where Wyman had gone.

"Can't you hurry up?" I said nervously. "Let's get past this mob."

Hazel obligingly put on speed, and we turned the corner and drove up under the huge pillared entrance; not without some hazard to the lawn, not without attracting more attention. But I thought Agnes hadn't seen us, and I didn't want her to see me with Hazel. Not just yet. For I had thought up no explanations; I'd have to improvise everything, improvise rapidly and at some length, and I was never good at extemporaneous alibis. I was scared.

So I dismounted, while Hazel and Sarah drove on toward the hotel garage, and as I opened the screen door I was almost overrun by Hershfield and a half dozen of his colleagues. I gathered that one of them had recognized Hazel, and the pugilistic twelve-million-dollar dream of heaven from Tonopah was a godsend to active young men who had already exhausted most of the possibilities of humor and human interest among the delegates. When I saw her again, she was surrounded by a phalanx of newspapermen who had come to interview and remained to adore.

BUT that was later. I took my courage in my hands and strode blithely out on the veranda, and there I found Agnes, walking arm in arm with a woman of no particular age, race, calling, appearance or importance. Agnes greeted me with a look that undoubtedly meant something, but was too deep to interpret. Another advance; a week ago her emotions couldn't be concealed.

"I owe you a thousand apologies," I began.

"I wondered where you were. Miss Spivey, this is Dr. Deupree, of whom I have told you so much. His family and I are very old friends. He speaks to-night. Well, Doctor—did you have a pleasant week-end in town?"

It seemed to me there was something malicious in her tone.

"Frightfully dull," I assured her. "I was most unlucky to miss you, and more unlucky, perhaps, to meet Dr. McCabe, the head of my department, five minutes after I found you'd gone."

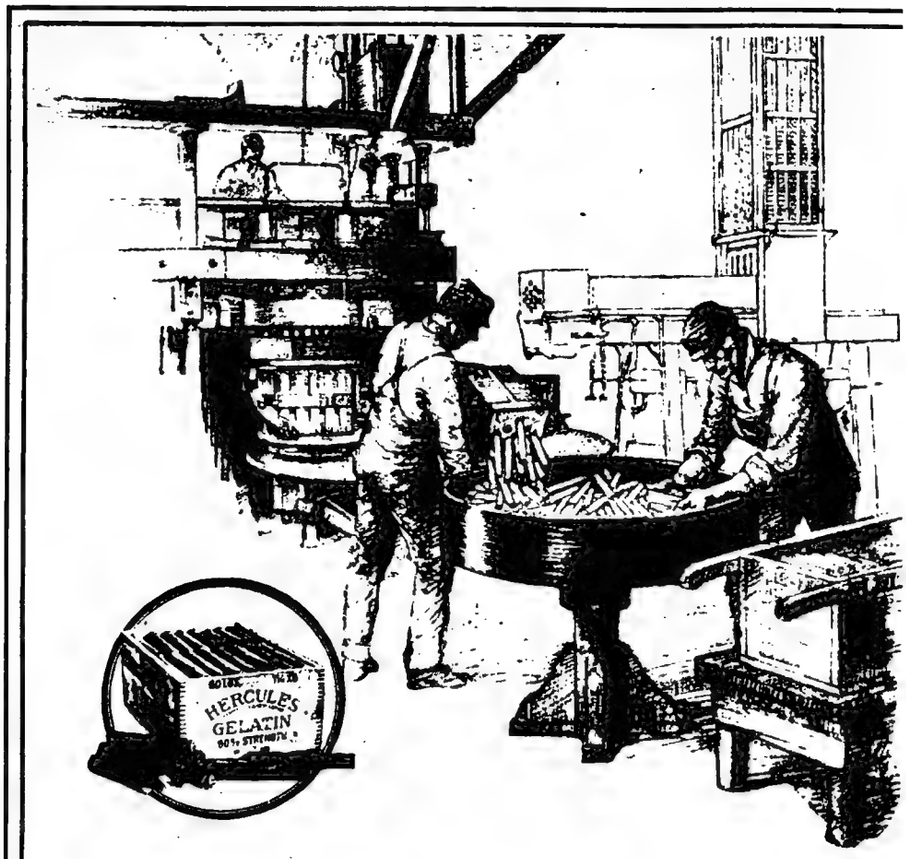
"Was he at the Ritz?"

"No," I said, realizing that Agnes was learning how to cross-examine. "I happened to meet him on Forty-second Street. And he was insistent that I must take a day off to discuss my book with him; he's very much interested, of course——"

"I should think he might have permitted you to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest," Agnes remarked. "However, no doubt he has different ideas. So I suppose you spent yesterday working in your apartment?"

Now was the time to improvise.

"I didn't even have that much luck," I told her. "Yesterday morning I ran into a man—a man named Pemberton. An assistant professor, like myself. Of mathematics. Higher mathematics, you know. He—he was in dreadfully bad luck; his landlord had just put him out, and he and his wife had no place to go. You know there's a terrible shortage of apartments just now. And they had three children—or four. Yes, four. So I told them they could spend a day or two in my apartment till they could find a place to live, and I



It's the Man That Counts

The human element probably plays a more important part in the making of explosives than in any other manufacturing process conducted on a large scale. There are no machines in the twelve great Hercules plants that need only to be started at the beginning of a day, stopped at the end, and which in the meantime carry out their tasks without attention.

Every machine used in the making of Hercules Explosives has a man for its master. Every motion it makes is watched. The results of its work are carefully checked. Nothing is ever taken for granted. No machine is looked upon as infallible.

In the gelatin packing house, for example, is a large machine which fills paper cartridges with *Hercules Gelatin Dynamite. Although this machine works with almost positive precision and accuracy, every cartridge which comes from it is inspected *twice* to make certain that it is properly packed. One inspection takes place immediately after the cartridge leaves the machine. Another before it is finally boxed for shipment.

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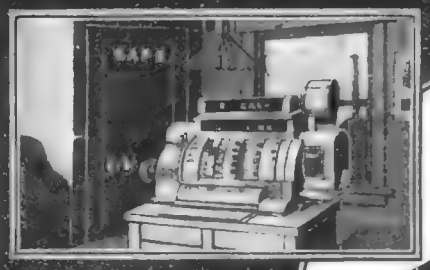

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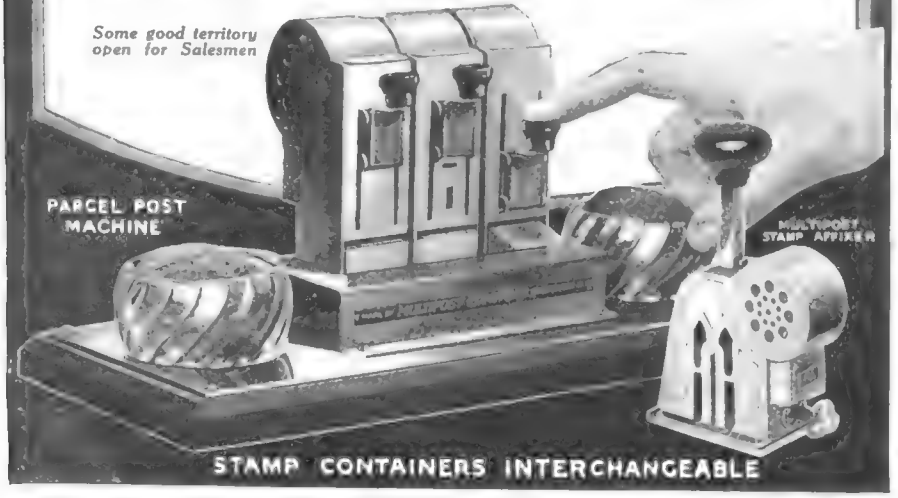

had to put in the rest of the day at the—the Faculty Club."

"I see," said Agnes. "It was very generous of you. But will they be out in time for your tea to-morrow?"

"Oh, the tea," I temporized. "The tea. Why, you see——"

"I'm looking forward to that," said Agnes. "I refused an invitation to address the child-labor section of the conference on that afternoon, because I had a previous engagement. I do hope they'll be out."

The tea seemed to be forced on me. Maybe I could get rid of Lucile, or somebody, and keep it down to manageable proportions.

"I'm sure they'll be out then," I said. "Pemberton—Pemberton said he'd look for an apartment to-day. Yes, the tea is safe enough."

"Miss Spivey and I have some business in town to-morrow," said Agnes. "But the tea—perhaps I am not saying too much, Dr. Deupree, when I assure you that the tea is something that I've been counting on. Haven't I, Miss Spivey?"

Of course by that time I could do nothing but ask Miss Spivey too; there was no way out. There was no particular reason why I should seek a way out now; there might be safety in numbers. Still I felt uneasy. I should have to ask Wyman about this.

"Then after your labors of yesterday," Agnes pursued, "it must have been very pleasant to drive up here by motor this morning. I quite envied you when I saw you come in."

AGNES was getting on. Either somebody had been coaching her, or she had talents that I'd never suspected. And I was beginning to feel sure that she didn't appreciate her Pygmalion. Or perhaps she did appreciate me, and her persistence was only her little way of showing it.

"Yes, it was a rather pleasant trip," I admitted desperately. "I came up with a little friend of my cousin, Mrs. Torrey—a schoolgirl from the West who's visiting her."

"I didn't catch the name," said Agnes.

"Deming—Hazel Deming. She wanted to talk to me to find out if she could enter Barnard next year."

"Naturally she would seek your advice," Agnes agreed. "There were two or three things that I promised you'd do—a young friend from Illinois tells me that he would like a place on the faculty of Columbia; and I assured him that your influence would probably be able to obtain it for him. He was very grateful. And what was the name of that lady from Los Angeles, Miss Spivey—the one who wants to obtain a post as correspondent for some of the New York papers in the war-stricken lands of eastern Europe? Mr. Wyman tells me that you know many journalists, so I told her that you could give her some valuable introductions. And there were one or two other matters that I've forgotten for the moment; but I'll think of them."

I was sure she would think of them. The woman evidently thought she owned me, body and soul. I was just about to ask her about Wyman when——

"Ah, there is your little friend Miss Deming! She seems to be very much interested in the reporters. A strange taste, I should say; they have been very unsympathetic with the purposes of our conference. But I suppose a schoolgirl can

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hardly be said to have taste, can she? After all, to wear a tam and a sports coat to a gathering such as this——"

And that from Agnes, who a month ago didn't know that tams and sports coats existed! It was borne in upon me that no matter how wholly any woman might be willing to trust me with herself, not many of them would trust me at all with another woman.

Providentially, about that time people began to go in to lunch.

"I hope Miss Spivey will excuse us," I suggested. "I've counted a great deal on being able to have you to myself at luncheon."

"It would be pleasant," she admitted. "But you see, I didn't know whether you were coming back or not, and Miss Spivey and I are lunching with Mrs. Daingerfield of Arlington, the lady who is hostess of the conference."

And they left me—left me in no cheerful frame of mind. But there were compensations; I went forth to look for Hazel. I found her at a table out on the terrace, sitting down with the reporters and Sarah.

"Isn't your seat going to be vacant?" I whispered to Hershfield.

"It is not! My seat is beside hers. You might make some sort of deal with Smith of the *Evening Post*—he's been told off to keep Mrs. Whitlow out of the picture."

I WENT away from there, toward the bar. But on the stairs I ran into Wyman.

"Well, Alec! The gods be praised! Have you come back to your duties? Well, you're just in time. If you had failed to appear to-day Mrs. Clevenger would have had to look out for herself. She wears a little, Alec; she wears a little——"

"What's the matter with her? She seems to be the most imposing person here."

"Imposing is the word. The first night, Alec, I was in raptures. But one must rest the eye from time to time; you can't simply look at her. I had to talk to her. Worse, I had to listen to her. She's somewhat dogmatic, Alec. Somewhat all-inclusive. Somewhat ex-cathedra, if you get me."

"I know her," I admitted. "But did you keep her amused?"

"Oh, I held my own," he said cheerfully. "I held my own. Except for about half an hour. Things got so infernally dull yesterday afternoon that—you didn't tell me very much about this woman, Alec—that I asked her to come out in the lounge and have a drink. Well! Your college all but lost its endowment fund in that moment. She told me she'd never had a drink in her life."

"That is not wholly her fault," I informed him. "But I suppose she didn't like it."

"She didn't. I had to work hard to keep her from reporting me to the manager of the hotel. But for half an hour, I flatter myself, I was at my best; eventually it was smoothed over."

"But have you kept her away from Gushmore?"

"Oh, beautifully. I was with her when she first met him; I stuck like a burr, for all his impolite suggestions that I should chase myself, and I got her away in two minutes. He hasn't talked to her since, unless they've done a Romeo and Juliet on the fire-escape while I was asleep. All day yesterday I kept her amused—if you've

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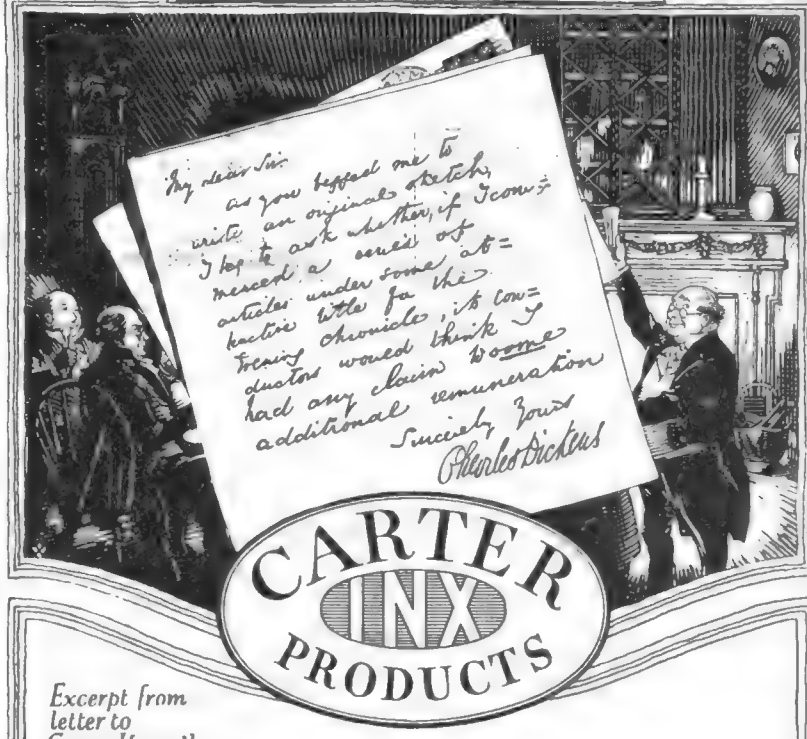

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ever tried to keep her amused on the Sabbath you'll appreciate that—and last night, when the strain was becoming too much, I found a woman to help me."

"Miss Spivey?" I asked, with a great load lifting from my soul.

"Emerine Spivey. Yes, you don't believe it, but that's her name. She's secretary of something; I don't know what. But I learned that she is also an ancient and irreconcilable enemy of Gushmore, and that he did his best to get her sent back to New York. From all I can hear, she never had an invitation at all; she just turned up, and even Gushmore couldn't send her away. When I heard that I decided that if anybody was divinely anointed to look after Mrs. Clevenger it was Emerine Spivey rather than myself. Have I done well?"

He had, I thought.

CHAPTER TWELVE
A Tête-à-Tête

IT SEEMED to be my off day. I hunted out Agnes before the afternoon session and asked her if I might sit with her; she was willing enough, but we'd just placed two comfortable chairs beside a wide window that opened out from the assembly hall toward the terrace, and had settled down to keep cool during the proceedings, when Gushmore found us. I prepared to defend Agnes, but he wanted me.

"My dear Doctor Deupree, we've missed you very badly. I know you have many responsibilities and preoccupations in town, but we'd counted on your advice and assistance, in addition to your address. Won't you come up on the platform with the committee?"

"I hardly feel that that is my place," I said. "Mrs. Clevenger and I——"

"I release you," Agnes put in cheerfully. "I should not dream of standing between you and an honor that is rightfully yours."

It was clear that she would release me by force if necessary, so I followed Gushmore to the platform and sat down on a sticky chair in a row of solemn persons in black frock coats. They were furtively running their handkerchiefs under their collars, most of them, and as the hall filled up, rows of palm-leaf fans began to wave in perfect time.

Long before the first paper came to a belated end, the reverend clergyman who sat beside me had leaned over in a worshipful attitude with his head bowed on his hands, and went to sleep; but there were more papers. For three hours and more I endured the affliction that my desire for a pleasant outing had brought upon me, while the conference heard about the reduction of illiteracy, the problem of the unmarried mother, the shop steward movement, and the righteous demand of India to be freed from British rule. There was a praiseworthy listlessness about the audience; nobody seemed to thrill with righteous indignation; only Gushmore sat erect in the center of the front row, his hand thrust in the bosom of his frock coat, his eyes fixed on the ceiling with a look of thankfulness that he was permitted to hear such words of edification. And he had reason to be thankful; Wyman had told me that he had four or five satellites who did the leg work for him, and it seemed probable that among the groups of delegates who now and again repassed our windows as they strolled up and down the terrace there were those who were sowing the seed and planting thoughts that might germinate into legacies, subventions, and donations.

I was relieved to see Agnes leaving with Miss Spivey long before it was over; she seemed to have had sufficient of Gushmore's intellectual feast. Once I caught a glimpse of Hazel's green tam through the window; her retinue was still at her heels, while I sat and sweltered and became filled with a great distaste for all forward-looking movements. By the time the meeting ended I had resolved that when the time came I would turn my emotion into action. I would say some things that greatly needed to be said. And as the first step in that program, I went out to the desk and insisted on paying my hotel bill with Bonner's money. What I had on my mind would not permit me to be under obligation to Gushmore and the old lady from Massachusetts.

Agnes and Miss Spivey were nowhere in sight, but I observed with interest, even with enthusiasm, that two or three of Gushmore's scouts had cornered Sarah Whitlow. Wyman explained it; from the reporters the news had spread among the delegates that twelve million dollars had unexpectedly arrived at the conference, and everybody whose private millenium was still in need of a heavy investment had gone forth to lay an ambush. But Hazel was in the lounge with the reporters, and Sarah, the devoted rear guard, had been caught in the barrage.

WHICH worked ideally. I walked in on Hazel and her bodyguard just as she was announcing that it was her turn to buy, and reminded her that she was going to take me out to dinner.

"Good-by, boys," she said, hastily getting up. "See you this evening. Well, Alec! Let's hurry, while Sarah is still busy. I'll have somebody tell her when we're out of sight, so she won't start dragging the swimming-pool, and then we can get away from this."

We slipped out to the garage, under fire from three or four movie cameras; Hazel seemed to be regarded as news.

"Never mind," I told her. "I'll give your friend something to write about tonight."

"Your speech?"

"My real speech. Not the one I wrote, but the one I'm going to deliver. I'm going to tell this conference what I think of it."

"And what do you think of it?"

"Not all of it is fit for your ears," I explained. "But I'll tell you a part of it. I have been told about two thousand times this afternoon that these are stirring times we live in; that a great wind of discontent is sweeping through the world; that in every land and every clime the oppressed and downtrodden have heard that all that is wrong is being righted, and that now is the time to lay the ax to the root of ancient error and bring in the brotherhood of man. And I suppose it's true. We've chopped out quite a lot of ancient error and thrown it on the brush-pile, and we've done about all we can stand. We've had high-mindedness crowded down our throats till the taste begins to cloy. It occurs to me that what we need for the next twenty-five years is a sinful self-satisfaction. We want

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to get ourselves settled down. We want to pass the word around that if any time-honored wrongs have been overlooked in the recent excitement, and are still flourishing, they can damn well stay where they are and flourish like a green bay tree for the next generation. What the soul of man really needs to be freed from is the conviction that it is up to each one of us to redress all the wrongs of the universe. This planet made some progress toward the millenium before our day, and it's about time for us to sit back and let it turn itself around for a while. That is the real new freedom—the freedom from responsibility for other people's moral welfare."

"I don't quite know what it's all about," said Hazel, "but it sounds well. However, Sarah will catch us if you deliver any more of your speech now; leave it till to-night—Wait! there's Hershfield; he said he wanted to speak to you."

And he did. He took me by the elbow as one who is about to break the news of a bereavement, and led me out of earshot.

"Have a heart, Deupree. Have a heart. I thought it was Mrs. Clevenger that was going to save your college from ruin."

"It is," I said rather stiffly.

He whistled.

"Then you'd better go to it, and go in a hurry. I didn't know; I thought maybe you were going to loot the mines of Tonopah."

"I suppose it does look that way to the casual observer," I said slowly. "But it isn't that way."

"Glad to hear it," he said. "But if you'd been with this crowd four days, as I have, you'd feel that nobody is above suspicion. I knew you were campaigning for funds, and I saw you'd let the other one go——"

"I haven't let her go. I was in town over the week-end, so I got Wyman to look after her yesterday, and he drafted some woman to relieve him to-day."

"Do you know who the woman is?"

"A Miss Spivey. I don't know anything about her, except that she and Gushmore are deadly enemies."

HERSHFIELD took off his straw hat and fanned himself sorrowfully.

"Good night, *alma mater*. My boy, if Gushmore is a leech that woman is a suction pump. If he is a snake she is a cobra. Emerine Spivey is secretary of the Home for Orphans of the Victims of the Tobacco Habit. She's the best legacy hunter now living; she specializes in depriving widows and orphans of the bulk of the estate. Merciless toward the dead, she is equally unsparing of the living. She can smell gold farther away than a divining rod, and extract it more efficiently than the cyanide process. She is a thug, a yegg, and a pirate, and she's invincible because she's honest—all the money she gets does go to this fool home of hers: she lives on about twenty-five a week herself and turns the rest in for the cause. And you've let her have Mrs. Clevenger for thirty-six hours!

"Why did you ever let Wyman—A newspaperman could have given you that woman's record in a minute. Wyman evidently thought it was the field against Gushmore—protect your fleecy lamb from him and you were safe. But here the woods are full of timber wolves. It's every man for himself. Why, even you—you've got no right to feel so indecently moral about yourself; you're campaigning for a contribution; that's why you're here. Of course, you want money from one particular woman for a worthy purpose; the rest of them want money from anybody for any purpose. But you all want money, and this Spivey woman is a genius at getting it."

Three sharp honks from Hazel's horn reminded me of present duties.

"I'm busy just now," I said, "but I'll get to work to-night. And if you can keep them apart over the dinner hour——"

"I'll try," he promised, "but don't expect too much. That woman sticks like adhesive tape."

I SUPPOSE I presented a sorrowful countenance to the movie cameras. But as we drove away up the river I began to recover. There was something restful about Hazel, always, and particularly now that she was taking me away from my worries. I could forget the agitations of my responsibilities; I could take life as it came. And just now it was coming very pleasantly.

I wished that it would never end; but when at last I looked at my watch I realized that it would have to end before it had really begun.

"It's five minutes of eight," I cried in alarm, "and we must be fifty miles from Maplecrest. The night session begins at eight-thirty, and I'm due a little after nine. I'd like to go on forever; but—We'll not even have time for dinner; you'd better turn around now."

Hazel stepped on the something, and the needle of the speedometer swung half-way round the circle.

"Oh, no!" she said calmly. "You need a rest. Your nerves are ragged."

I realized that I must be firm with her.

"Turn around," I commanded, "or I'll take the wheel away from you."

"Maybe you could pull my hands off," she said, "but I'm pretty strong. And while you were trying it the car would be doing a nose dive over the bluff. Must be two hundred feet to the bottom. Want to try it, or will you be good?"

"But my speech! I promised Gushmore——"

"Don't worry about Gushmore. I told that little fellow from the *Tribune* to tell Gushmore that you were overcome by the heat, and that the hotel doctor had ordered you to bed. In other words, Alec, you're being very thoroughly kidnaped. I'm segregating one of the socially inefficient. Are you going to be nice about it?"

"You leave me no choice," I protested. "But as a matter of fact, I rather like it."

"I knew you'd be sensible. Now do you see that string of lights over there toward the river? That looks like a restaurant. We might get some dinner there; but I suppose you'd slip out and steal the car and drive back to Mrs. Clevenger. Oh, Alec! How you kidded me along about her! I thought she was old and gray. No, I wouldn't dare stop for dinner; you'd go back to your widow. You devil among women, you!"

"Even devils among women have to eat," I said. "And they prefer to eat among women; not necessarily widows."

"Then if you'll promise not to run away and leave me——"

I promised; and we presently found

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ourselves at a little table on a terrace, where we could see for miles up and down the river; with a shaded lamp throwing a pink glow on the whiteness of the table-cloth, and an orchestra playing somewhere inside. When the meal had been ordered Hazel studied me with an expression I couldn't quite understand.

"If I'd never met you till to-day," she said presently, "I think I'd be rather afraid of you."

It seemed to me that she ought to be rather afraid of me anyway. I was twenty-nine and she was nineteen; I was going to be a professor next year, and next year she would be a sophomore.

"What did I do to scare you?" I inquired.

"Oh, you didn't scare me, exactly. But that speech you were going to make——"

"What was the matter with it?" I asked. "And why won't you let me make it? It needs to be said."

"It needs to be said," Hazel agreed, "but not by you. Let somebody who's running for President say it first. It isn't safe to be too far ahead of the crowd."

"I should regard it as an honor," I told her, "to be ahead of that particular crowd, or behind it, or anywhere but with it. They need a jolt."

"If you'd said what you were going to say it would have started a fight."

"I'd have liked that," I said.

"Of course you'd have liked it," Hazel agreed. "But your university might not have liked it; particularly with what the reporters would have made out of it. You're going to be promoted next year if you're good; if you get into a fuss they might decide to give somebody else the benefit of the doubt. Now do you see why I kidnaped you?"

There was reason in her remarks, but I thought there was a certain impertinence in her calmly pulling me out of a hole without asking me about it.

"Oh, I know you think I've got too much nerve," she admitted amiably. Maybe I have. But you let yourself in for this thing when you accepted their invitation, and I was just getting you out by the easiest way—like pretending you've got a headache when you don't want to dance with somebody. Now honestly, Alec—aren't you glad?"

I WAS glad. And my gladness was heightened by the arrival of a steak, to which we addressed ourselves with real earnestness. Later—much later, when I had lit a cigar and Hazel had decided to make one of her infrequent experiments with a cigaret—we came around to the alluring possibilities of further kidnapings when Hazel had got her Sagamore.

"I really do have to work hard," I reminded her, "if I want to finish this book by September. I've lost a good deal of time, what with one thing and another. But suppose I'll need a little relaxation now and then, and I do want to show you some of our town."

"I'll probably know a good deal about your town by the end of the summer," said Hazel. "You're not the only volunteer guide who has offered his services. I had a wireless this morning from Kenneth France—a regular volume. His ship is due the first of next week, and he told me he'd show me everything the reform wave had left."

"Who's Kenneth France?" I demanded.

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"Why, I thought everybody knew Kenneth France! He used to be the Harvard fullback. He went to war and got sixteen German planes; and then he went back to California and played around with me a while, and ran a couple of big ranches. Last winter he went to London on business, and now he's coming home. He knows everybody in New York—the kind Mrs. Torrey knows, and actors and artists besides. He says he'll take Fifth Avenue and Broadway and Washington Square apart and show me what makes the wheels go round, and so on."

"And then," I said sulkily, "you'll think you've seen New York."

"Well?" she challenged. "I'll have seen what everybody hears about. Is there more than that to your town?"

"It's quite a town," I said. "France can show you things that I can't. He'll show you people who've arrived. It doesn't make so much difference what they've arrived at; the point is that they've got there, and all they have to do is to stay there and show off. I'll show you the people who are still arriving—who may never arrive, but keep on trying. People who come from the ends of the earth looking for something that most of them never get, and yet they stay. They like it.

"I'll show you people who are desperately poor and quite possibly desperately dirty, living in conditions you and I couldn't endure for a day; but living, reading, thinking, helping each other with their last cent, and always, through the drudgery and the dirt, climbing. Men and women who came to America to use the gifts they couldn't use where they were born; who've turned their backs now that they're here on the big things they wanted to do and could do because they were needed first of all to help those of their own people who didn't have gifts—help them to get a start.

"EVEN where Kenneth France takes you you'll see plenty of the *nouveaux riches*—unfortunately we have no segregated district for them. I'll show you something more cheerful—the *nouveaux bourgeois*—people who are just crawling up over the ragged edge, who've just begun to realize that they can live in a certain amount of comfort. They may not suit the fastidious taste, but they're alive.

"I'll show you a dozen little neighborhoods cut off by the sweep of the business district or the slums, where a few old peop' are still hanging on and trying to keep up the old tradition. And I'll show you a thousand places all over the town where young people are living on the edge of destitution—living in bare little flats, not sure but that the foot of the rainbow is just as far away as ever—wasting the livest blood in the country, perhaps, because they can't afford to have children; with little chance to make real friends, or to hold them; but working hard, playing a little, dreaming a little, clinging to each other's hands, and liking it. Why do they like it? I don't know. They haven't got what they came for; they may never get it; they've given up everything else, as a rule, and they don't know whether they'll ever get anything. But they do like it; you couldn't chase them away. Well, that's my town. Do you want to see it?"

Continued in the December EVERYBODY'S

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Style, comfort and mechanical efficiency combine to make the *New* Briscoe an outstanding value. Priced moderately, it yet offers you the maximum of service and satisfaction.

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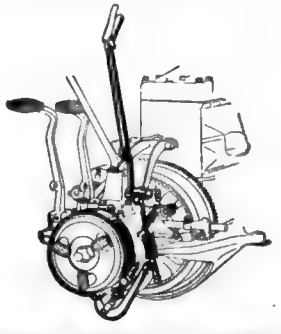
This powerful brake gives a positive, effective grip, made still more effective by its acting through the high-speed propeller shaft instead of on the wheels—truly an emergency brake.



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SHAMPOO

is always a source of gratification to the vast number of attractive women who have learned its virtues. The cooling, soothing influence of its fragrant, invigorating lather upon the sensitive scalp brings grateful relief to sufferers from itching and dandruff. It makes and keeps the hair attractive by developing the life, lustre and natural waviness through cleanliness. It is a favorite because it so rapidly softens and removes every particle of dirt, excess oil or dandruff, at the same time giving a fluffiness that lends the appearance of massiness to the hair.

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One reason for the great popularity of Canthrox is that it requires so little trouble or time to use it. You just apply the fragrant, invigorating lather thickly, rub thoroughly into the hair and scalp, rinse out carefully with clear, warm water, after which it dries quickly and easily.

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PHILO BURT CO.
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IN RED *and* GOLD

(*Continued from page 20*)

He understood. The suicide of girls as a protest against unwelcome marriage was a commonplace in China. It was indeed, for thousands, the only way out. She knew that of course. And she spoke there out of her blood.

He asked her, abruptly changing his manner, almost distantly courteous, about her life in an American college. Little by little, as she made the effort to follow him into this impersonal atmosphere, her brightness returned.

The Sousa record was scraping its last. Applause came from the dancers, in which she joined. The Manila Kid wound the machine again, and placed the needle in a groove near the end of the march. The dancers swung again into motion.

"I am asking too much of you," she murmured. "But I have been frighten'. I could not think wha' to do."

He had to set his teeth on the burning phrases that rushed from his long unpractised heart, eager for utterance.

"I will take you back to your father," he said.

In his mind it was settled. Whatever strange events might lie before them, they should not take her to Peking. His own life as well as hers stood in the way. It had come to that with him.

III

IT WAS near to midnight when the *Yen Hsin*, on advices from Hankow to his Excellency, headed again up-stream. At the first throb of the engine the white passengers stopped dancing and came out on deck. There was gaiety, even a little humorous cheering.

It was perhaps two hours later when Doane, asleep in his cabin, heard the shots, confused with the incidents of a dream. But at the first screams of the women below decks he sprang from his berth.

Some one was banging on his door; he opened; the second engineer stood there, coatless and hatless, a big revolver in his hand, and a little blood on his cheek.

"All hell's broken loose below," said the young Scotchman. "Chief's down there. I tried to get to him, but—God, they're all over the place—fighting each other."

"Who are, MacKail?" Doane hurriedly drew on trousers and coat, and thrust his feet into his slippers.

"The viceroy's soldiers. Revolutionary stuff."

Doane got his automatic pistol from a drawer in the desk; quickly filled an extra clip with cartridges; went forward. The Scotchman had already gone aft.

The engine was still running, the steamer moving steadily up the moonlit river. The uproar below decks sounded muffled, far away. It might have been nothing more than a little night excitement in a village along the shore. The shooting continued. Men were shouting. There were more shrill screams; and then splashes overside. As he hurried forward, glaring over the rail, Doane caught a passing glimpse of a face down there in the foam, and a white arm. The passengers were stumbling drowsily out of their cabins; he saw one of the customs men in pajamas, and Tex

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Connor. They hurled questions at him, but he brushed them aside.

Captain Benjamin stood over the cringing pilot with a revolver.

"Engine-room don't answer!" he shouted. "And we can't get to it. Take MacKail and try to get through. I'll make this rat keep her in the channel."

Doane ran back. More of the men were out, talking excitedly together. He paused to say—

"Get any weapons you have, every man of you, and see that none but women get up to this deck! Keep them down!"

MacKail stood at the head of the port after stairway, outside the rear cabins, a big Australian beside him.

"They're just naturally carving one another up," observed the Australian.

"Come," said Doane, and went down the steps.

THE noise and confusion were great down here. Women were crowding out of the lower cabins, sobbing hysterically, tearing their hair and beating their breasts, crowding forward and aft along the deckway or climbing awkwardly over the rail and slipping off into the river.

Doane shouted a reassuring word in their own tongue; pointed to the steps; finally drew one girl forcibly back from the rail and started her up. Others followed, screaming all the way. Still others clung to the white men.

Doane broke away and stepped into the dim interior of the boat. Most of the lights were out. Dark figures were wrestling. There were grunts, groans, savage cries of rage and triumph. A huge poleknife caught the light as it swung. An odd fact amid the uproar—Doane was aware of men breathing hard.

He stumbled over an inert body, would have fallen had not the Australian caught him. A tall soldier who lunged toward them with a bayonet was shot by MacKail. There were no means here of distinguishing the parties to this savage struggle, but in the inner corridor it was lighter. Near at hand two of the republicans—cues cut off, dressed in an indistinguishable but odd-appearing uniform of some light-gray stuff, with a white cloth tied about the left arm—had heaped bodies across the corridor and were shooting over them at a darker mass just forward of the engine-room.

Doane shouted at the republicans, ordering them to withdraw. They shook their heads angrily. One, even as he tried to reply, sank into a limp heap with a dark stream trickling from a hole in his forehead. His comrade bent low to reload his rifle. With the shouting of many hoarse voices the dark mass up forward came charging down the corridor. Doane was firing into them when MacKail and the Australian caught his arm and drew him back through the doorway. From that position, however, all three could shoot the blue-clad attackers as they plunged by the opening.

Then they had to defend themselves. The soldiers came on by dozens. Doane had his second clip of cartridges in his pistol.

"Get back!" he shouted to the others. "Guard the steps—they'll be coming up for loot!"

They retreated. Two bodies lay huddled on the steps they had left but a few moments earlier. A few dead women were on the deck, and three blue soldiers.

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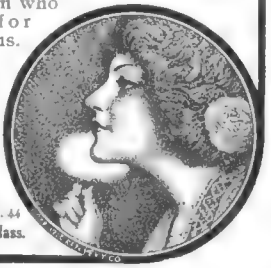

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DIAMONDS - PEARLS - GEMS - JEWELRY
WATCHES - CLOCKS - SILVERWARE

Even as they stepped over the bodies and mounted to the deck above, all three men, their faculties sharpened by the ugly thrill of combat to a supernormal degree, took in the details of what was evidently accepted among these republican rebels as their uniform—a suit of unmistakably American woolen underwear, the drawers supported by bright-colored American suspenders; socks worn outside (like the suspenders) with garters that bore the trade-mark name of an American city, and finally, American shoes. So the enthusiasm of these young revolutionists for the greatest of republics found expression! And across the breast of each, lettered on a strip of white cloth, was the inscription that Sun Shi-pi had so glibly translated as "Dare to Die." Sun must have brought these supposedly Western uniforms along in his pedler's trunks.

IT WAS never to be known what surprising incidents had preceded this sudden slaughter. The chief engineer might have told, but his mutilated body Doane found, on his second attempt to get through, lying just across the sill of the engine-room.

The entire battle lasted barely half an hour. It was, for the white folk, a period of confusion and terror. Toward the end, the blue men, utter outlaws now, made rush after rush up the various stairways and ladders, only to be fought back at every point by the white men and the few surviving officers of his Excellency's force. They were like the most primitive of savages, knowing neither fear nor reason. The blood-lust that at times captures the spirit of this normally phlegmatic and reasonable people drove them for the time to the point of madness.

At last, however, they drew off below. Two of the boats were within their reach. These they lowered, and despite the speed of steamer and current, though not without evident loss of life, they got them over, tumbled into them, and fell away into the night astern.

Then for the first and last time this night Doane saw the redoubtable Tom Sung. He stood in the nearer boat, brandishing a rifle and screeching wild phrases in Chinese.

MacKail took the engine-room. Captain Benjamin, still, grimly, pistol in hand, held the pilot to his task. There was no crew to clean the shambles below decks, yet with the few loyal soldiers who had managed to hide away now at the furnaces, the steamer wound her way steadily upstream.

Doane found what had once been the earnest Sun Shi-pi in the starboard corridor, below. On his body was the uniform, white brassard and motto of the "Dare to Dies." They had beheaded him.

The passengers, clad and half clad, nervous, talkative, hung about the decks. The two teachers, curiously self-possessed, sat side by side at the dining-table. From the quarters of his Excellency, aft, came the continuous sound of women moaning and wailing. It was, to the eye, but a river steamer plowing up-stream in the moonlight. But to the senses of those aboard the situation was already an incredible memory while yet sleep-drugged eyes were slowly opening.

In his spacious cabin, his eyes shaded from the electric light by a screen of jade set in tulip wood, dressed in his robes of ceremony, wearing the ruby-crowned hat

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of state with the down-slanting peacock feather, his Excellency sat quietly reading the precepts of Chuang Tzu.

"Hui Tzu asked"—(he read) 'Are there, then, men who have no passions? If he be a man, how can he be without pas sions?'

" 'By a man without passions,' replied Chuang Tzu, 'I mean one who permits neither evil nor good to disturb his inner life, but accepts whatever comes. . . . The pure men of old neither loved life nor hated death. Cheerfully they played their parts, patiently awaited the end. This is what is called not to lead the heart away from Tao. . . . The true sage ignores God; he ignores man; he ignores a beginning; he ignores matter; he accepts life as it may be and is not overwhelmed. If he fail, what matters it? If he succeed, is it not that he was provided through no effort of his own with the energy necessary to success. . . . The life of man passes like a galloping horse, changing at every turn. What should he do; what should he not do? It passes as a sunbeam passes a small opening in a wall—here for a moment, then gone. . . . Let knowledge stop at the unknowable. That is perfection.' "

IV

IT IS to be doubted if even Doane gave regard at the moment to the possible origin of the fire. It had spread through two or three of the upper cabins by way of the ventilating grills when he appeared, and was roaring out through a doorway by the time he heard the new outcry and ran to the spot. The white men were rushing about. Rocky Kane, collarless, disheveled, was fumbling ineffectually at the emergency fire hose; him Doane pushed aside. But the flames spread amazingly; worked through the grillwork from cabin to cabin; soon were licking at the walls and furniture of the social hall.

Doane left Dawley Kane and Tex Connor—an oddly matched couple—manning the hose, others at work with the chemical extinguishers, while he went forward through the thickening smoke to the bridge.

Captain Benjamin said, huskily, almost apologetically—his eyes red and staring, his face haggard—"I'm beaching her."

And in another moment she struck, where the channel ran close under an island.

Lowering the boats without a crew proved difficult. Already the fire had reached those forward. Doane, the other mate and MacKail did what they could. The Chinese women crowded hither and thither, screaming, rendering order impossible. In the confusion one boat drifted off with only Connor, the Manila Kid, and Miss Carmichael.

Captain Benjamin was cut off by the quick progress of the flames. The whole forward end of the cabin structure was now a roaring furnace, fortunately working forward on the up-stream breeze, rather than aft. The flames blazed from moment to moment higher; sparks danced higher yet; the heat was intense. Doane sent the viceroy and his suite below, aft, where the deck was still strewn with bodies and slippery with blood. With three available boats, fighting back the crowding women and the more excitable among his Excellency's secretaries, he sent ashore, first women, then his Excellency and the men.

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With a film-coat on your teeth

All statements approved by authorities

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You owe yourself a trial of this new teeth-cleaning method. Dentists everywhere advise it. The results it brings are all-important, and they do not come without it.

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Hui Fei—she had slipped hastily into the little Chinese costume she wore at their midnight talk, and had thrown about it an opera cloak from New York—went in one of the first boats; Doane himself handed her in. The two teachers, pale, very composed, followed. At the oars were two of the customs men, faces streaked with grime and sweat.

To his Excellency, as the last boats got away, Doane said—

"I will follow you soon. I must look once more for the Captain."

"I will send back a boat," said the viceroy.

"Thank you, no," Doane replied, "I will swim;" and forthwith he ran up to the upper and promenade decks. There was no sound save the roaring and crackling of the fire. In the large after cabin stood the six-fold Ming screen. Quickly he folded it; there seemed a chance of getting it ashore.

HE STEPPED out on deck. There, clear aft, leaning against the cabin wall, stood Rocky Kane, like a man half asleep, rubbing his eyes, and crouching against his knee, clinging to his hand, was the little princess in her gay golden yellow vest over the flowered skirt, and her quaint hood of foxskin.

Doane caught the young man's shoulder; swung him about; looked closely into the dull eyes with the tiny pupils.

"So!" he cried—"that again, eh!"

"I can't understand"—thus Rocky—"I don't see how it could have happened. It couldn't have been my fault."

He was quite unstrung. Doane saw now that his head had been burned above one ear; and the hand that pressed his face was blistered white.

"It *wasn't* my fault! I found myself out on deck. I tried to get the hose."

"Yes, I saw you. Quick—get below."

Doane lifted the little princess tenderly into his arms.

Rocky was still incoherently talking; promising reform; blaming himself in the next breath after hotly defending himself. His voice was somewhat thick. He was drowsy—swayed and stumbled as he moved toward the stairs.

Doane, speaking gently in Chinese to the child, stood a moment considering. The heat was becoming intolerable. It wouldn't do to keep the little one here. Whatever might have become of the captain, there was certainly no moving forward. He descended the stairs.

Below, the boy faced him.

"I'm no good," he whimpered. "I can't wake up. Hit me—do something—I won't be like this."

Doane considered him during a brief instant. They were under a light, their feet slipping on the deck, bodies lying about.

With the flat of his hand, then, Doane struck the side of the boy's head that was not burned; struck harder than he meant, for the boy went down, and then, after sprawling about, got muttering to his feet.

"It's all right!" he cried unsteadily. "I asked you to do it. I'm going to get hold of myself. I've been no good—rotten. I've touched bottom. But I'm going to fight it out—get somewhere." His egotism, even now, amazingly held him. But his pupils were widening a little; he was in earnest, crying bitterly out of a drugged mind and conscience. And Doane, looking down at him, felt stirring in his heart (though curiously mixed with a twinge of jealousy for his youth and the hopes before him) something of the sympathy his long deep experience had instilled there toward blindly struggling young folk. Boys, after all, were normally egotists. And Heaven knew this boy had so far been given no sort of a chance!

Doane led the way clear aft. The heat was terrific. From a row of fire buckets he sprinkled the little princess; bathed her temples. The water was warm, but it helped.

Young Kane, with a nervous movement, suddenly picked up one, then another, of the buckets and dashed them over himself. Distinctly he was coming to life.

"We may never come out of this, Mr. Doane," he said. "It's a terrible fix." More and more, as he came slowly awake, he was dramatizing the situation and himself. "But I want to say this. I've never known a man like you. You're fine—you're big—you've helped me as no one else has. I'll never be like you—it isn't in me. I've already gone as close to hell as a man can go and perhaps still save himself——"

"Can you swim?" asked Doane shortly.

"I—why, yes, a little. I'm not what you'd call a strong swimmer."

Doane was wetting the princess's face and his own. There would be little time left. He found a slight difficulty in breathing. There was smoke now, as well; evidently the fire had eaten through, forward, to the lower decks.

"They won't be able to get a boat back here," he said, and quietly pointed out the still blazing pieces of board that, after whirling into the air, were drifting by. A blast of heat swept about them, indicating a change of wind.

"Wait here a moment for me," he added. "I must make one more effort to find Captain Benjamin. If that fails, we can swim ashore."

V

HE TRIED working his way forward when the heat proved too great in the corridor, climbing out on the windward side of the hull. But the flames were eating steadily aft; he could not get far. Beaten back, he returned to the stern to discover that the child and Rocky Kane were gone. After a moment he saw them in the water, a few rods away, first a gleam of yellow that would be the jacket of the little princess, then their two heads close together.

He lowered himself down a boat-line and swam after them. In the water this giant was as easily at home as in any form of exercise on land. Within the year he had swum at night, alone, for the sheer vital pleasure the use of his strength brought him, the nine miles from Wusung to Shanghai—slipping between junks and steamers, past the anchored warships and a great P. & O. liner from Bombay. The water was cool, refreshing. He stretched his full length in it, rolling his face under as one arm and then the other reached out in slow, powerful strokes.

Young Kane was having no easy time of it. He was clearly out of wind. And the child whimpered as she clung tightly about his neck.

"I gave you up," he sputtered weakly. Then added, with an evidence of spirit that Doane found not displeasing: "No, don't

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take her, please! Just steady me a little." He was struggling in short strokes, splashing a good deal. "We ought to touch bottom now pretty quick."

Sampans and the boats of the cormorant fishers were edging into the wide circle of light about the steamer. Along the shore of the island clustered the groups of mandarins, their silk and satin robes forming a bright spot in the vivid picture.

Doane found the sand then; walked a little way and helped the nearly exhausted boy to his feet.

"They're coming down the shore," said Rocky, trying, without great success, to speak casually.

Doane looked up and saw them running—white men, Chinese servants, mandarins holding up their robes, women, and last, walking rapidly, his Excellency.

It was Hui Fei, throwing off her cloak and running lightly ahead, who took the frightened child from young Kane's arms and carried her tenderly up the bank. There as the attendants gathered anxiously about them, she tossed the child high, petted her, kissed her, until the tears gave place to laughter. The tall eunuch wrapped the little princess then in his own coat; and Hui Fei accepted the opera cloak that transformed her again in an instant from a slimly quaint Chinese girl to a young woman of New York.

Doane stood by. Toward him she did not look. But to Rocky Kane, who lay on the bank, she turned with bright eagerness.

He got, not without effort, to his feet.

Smiling—happily, it seemed to the bewildered, brooding Doane—she gave him her hand; led him to meet her father.

"You have met Mr. Kane," she said. "It was he who save' little sister. He risk' his life to bring her here, father."

Rocky, throwing back his hair and brushing the water from his eyes, stood, his sensitive face working nervously, very straight, very respectful, and took the hand of the viceroy.

There was, then, manhood in him. The viceroy recognized the fact in his friendly smile. Hui Fei plainly recognized it as she walked, chatting brightly, at his side, while he bent on her a gaze of boyish adoration.

AS FOR Doane, he moved away unobserved; dropped at length on a knoll, rested his great head on his hands, and gazed out at the blazing steamer. She would soon be quite gone. Poor Benjamin was gone already; a strange little man, one of the many that drift through life without a sense of direction, always bewildered about it, always hoping vaguely for some better lot. It had been a tragic night; and yet all this horror would soon seem but an incident in the spreading revolution. It had always been so in China. In each rebellion, as in the mighty conquests of the Mongols and the Manchus, death had stalked everywhere with a casual terribleness. Life meant, at best, so little. Genghis Khan's men had boasted of slaying twenty millions in the northwestern provinces alone within the span of a single decade. The new trouble must inevitably run its course; and what a course it might prove to be! From the mere effort to face this immediate future Doane found his mind recoiling; much as strong minds were to recoil, only three years later, when the German army should march through Belgium.

He gave up that problem, came down to the particular thought of this swiftly growing new love that had stolen into his heart. The hope of personal happiness had passed now. Self seemed, like the life to which it so eagerly clung, not to matter. Instead that hope was growing into a profound tenderness toward the girl. She was, after all—the thought came startlingly—about the age of his own daughter, Betty, whom he had not seen during these three strange years. Betty and her journalist husband would be somewhere in Turkestan now; he was studying central Asia for a book, she sketching the native types. For a long time no letter had come. It was a fine experience, this unbidden stir of the emotions, this thrill. There was mystery in it, and wonder. Merely to have that almost youthful responsiveness still at call within his breast was an indication that life might yet hold, even for him, the derelict, rich promise. And it was a reminder, now, to his clearing brain that his life must be service. He must find terms on which to offer himself, his gifts. His spirit had been molded, after all, to no lesser end.

THE viceroy drew away then from the group about the child; came deliberately along the bank. The increasing tenderness Doane felt toward Hui Fei reached also to her father, who was facing with such fine dignity the grim ending of a richly useful life. Now, perhaps, he could plead with him for the daughter's sake. Somehow, certainly, happiness must be found for her. In pleading he would be serving her.

His brain was swinging into something near balance; it was, after all, a good brain, trained to function clearly, mellowed through patient years of unhappiness. It would help him now to fight for the girl, to save her, if he might, from the dark ways of the Forbidden City. She called herself so naively an "American." The West had thrilled her. She must not be given over to the eunuch, Chang.

So, even as he contrived a sort of self-control, even as he determined to forget his own little moment of romantic hopefulness, the lover within him stood triumphant over all his other selves.

Continued in the December EVERYBODY'S.

Evening on Riverside

By Robert Nathan

Beyond the silent river,
One by one,
The lonely lights of Jersey, slowly growing,
People the dusk with stars.
The rain has spun
Quietness on all things, and the wind blowing
Gathers the darkness.
Southward to the bay
The misty voices of the ships are sweeping
Through my deep heart;
And the old, crabbed day
Whispers to sleep, and finally is sleeping

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The TREATY and ITS CRITIC

(Continued from page 22)

unanimously accepted is, on the contrary, of English and American source. Mr. Keynes protests against the international commissions of the Elbe and the Oder, and writes: "It is almost as though the European continental powers were to be placed in majority on the committee for the Thames." He forgets that the Thames has its origin in England and is an English river, whereas the Elbe and the Oder have their origin in new countries, for the benefit of which impartial guaranties had necessarily to be stipulated.

Mr. Keynes complains that certain economical clauses do not admit an immediate reciprocity to German trade. Does he know that through Germany the French and Belgian factories have been systematically ruined, whereas the German factories remain intact, and that it is in order to secure to the victims of this aggression the most justified protection, that this reciprocity has been deferred for five years? Mr. Keynes is alarmed about the situation of Germany, who will produce after the treaty less coal than she will consume. Is he unacquainted with the fact that, if the various deliveries demanded by the treaty did not figure there, France, during the next ten years, would have a production of only twenty-four million tons against a consumption of seventy-five millions?

Europe's Economic Unity

THUS owing to a systematic disregard of the reality, and laboring under the German obsession by which he is dominated, Mr. Keynes misrepresents the clearest and the most unquestionable clauses of the peace. He puts in the middle of a Europe which he considers trifling, a Germany that alone is worthy of interest, and on this basis he rebuilds the world in the name of economic solidarity, which he blames the mediators of peace for having stupidly neglected.

We did not have to wait to hear Mr. Keynes to know that such economic solidarity does exist. But one has the right to conceive this solidarity under another aspect than that of Mr. Keynes, who brings it into play only for Germany's exclusive profit. If, as he affirms, this solidarity demands that Germany should be able to work and produce, it requires just as much that France should also be allowed to do so. And if in this superior interest an immediate help has to be extended, it must be, so it seems, to those whose territory has been invaded and industry destroyed, more than to those who have known neither invasion nor destruction. Mr. Keynes forgets too easily that if Europe's economic prosperity has received a formidable blow, it is due to Germany's aggression. Mr. Keynes forgets that the ruins caused by this aggression are more grievous in France than in Germany. He refuses to acknowledge that reparation for these ruins is more pressing for the good of humanity than the thousand items in which he would want to have Germany profit at the expense of those she has attacked, devastated and ruined. In his mind, Germany is the center of the world. To Germany he sacrifices everything.

And here I am brought back once more to my first observation. For want of bearing in mind the responsibility for the war, Mr. Keynes refuses to understand the precautions the Allies have taken, and which it was their duty to take. With regard to precautions, the only ones to command his attention are those he claims in order that Germany shall not suffer too much from her defeat. The negotiators of the peace have obeyed another principle. They have considered that the first precautions to be taken were to prevent the repetition of the terrible calamity which Germany spread over the world. Hence their policy of guaranties. As between the authors of the treaty and Mr. Keynes this is the fundamental disagreement out of which all the others proceed. This disagreement must be stated precisely, because it dominates the debate. The signers of the peace have made their choice: the public will make its own.

Can Germany Pay?

IF THE point in question were only the reproach of injustice made by Mr. Keynes, I would have nothing to add. But Mr. Keynes might very likely answer that, after all, justice is no concern of an economist, which he professes to be. His second criticism, which is his principal objection to the treaty, is that it is unworkable, and that Germany will not pay and will never be in a situation to pay the obligations imposed on her.

Before proceeding to actual figures, the author puts forth in his argumentation two principles. First, that Germany is exhausted by the war. Second, that the treaty adds to her inevitable burden of the war the avoidable burden of a "Carthaginian" peace. I will not reiterate what I have said, that the situation resulting from the war is not that of Germany alone, but that it is the situation of all the belligerents, and that between these belligerents and Germany there exist after all two differences which Mr. Keynes never mentions: firstly, that the aggression was caused by Germany; secondly, that Germany has not been invaded. I take Mr. Keynes's reasoning as he presents it. I will confine it as he does to Germany alone, and in my turn I will set forth my figures, certain beforehand that Mr. Keynes will challenge them, as he did in his book, and as he challenged the damage accounts of France and Belgium, if the conclusion I draw is not in favor of Germany.

In order to prove that Germany can not pay, Mr. Keynes studies her situation as it was immediately after the defeat and the revolution—that is to say, at the lowest point of her curve. This method is defective. The treaty in effect is based on a payment spread out over a period of thirty to fifty years. Therefore it is an equivalent period of German history we have to consider, and not the present moment only, if we want to form an exact idea of her capacity to pay.

We can take as a period of comparison the one from 1870 to 1914. It represents forty-four years, and Mr. Keynes himself confesses that Germany's economic situation immediately after the treaty of Frankfort was not only very inferior to what it was in 1914, but even to that of France in 1870. Taking this as

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our starting-point—and without failing to take into consideration on the one hand the difference between victory and defeat, and on the other between Bismarck and M. Hermann Müller—let us follow from 1870 to 1914 Germany's development in productive power. A few figures will suffice to enlighten the question. From 1875 to 1910, the German population augmented fifty-two per cent.; the mortality diminished thirty-three per cent.; the production in coal and in lignite went up from twenty-four million tons to two hundred and eighty millions; the number of workmen in the basic mechanical industries increased from four hundred thousand to two millions. This is the country of which Mr. Keynes dares to affirm that first of all the war, and then the treaty, has broken its vital power, and that it is henceforth condemned to a lingering death. If one may judge of the future by the past, this view is truly more than exaggerated.

Now that this general observation is made on Germany's probable capacity of recovery, let us endeavor to estimate the impoverishment that will result to her from the war and the peace; and, in order to do it, let us consider what was before the war, and what is now, the annual surplus of the production over the consumption—that is to say, what will practically represent the means at her disposal for paying the annuities in gold. We know that before the war, and according to Helfferich's estimate, this annual surplus amounted to ten billions and the consumption to thirty-three. What is the after-war situation?

Germany's Productive Power

GERMANY'S productive force is considerably diminished by the effect of the three following causes: losses in killed and wounded; losses in territory; losses in capital, distinct from the losses in territory. It is possible to estimate the combined effect of these three causes.

I leave aside the losses in killed (one million eight hundred thousand) and in wounded (four million), whose action will hardly be lasting. The annual increase of the population before the war was eight hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants. If we deduct from this increase an eighth (which represents the reduction in population resulting from the losses in territory), there remains an annual increase of over seven hundred thousand inhabitants. If, on the other hand, we take into account the extension, officially recognized, of woman and child labor, and the limitation of the effective military forces to one hundred thousand men, it is certain that, from the labor point of view, Germany, in less than ten years, will have regained the losses caused by the war.

The losses in territory involve a loss of population and a loss of income. The population taken away from Germany by the treaty represents eight million inhabitants, or an eighth of the total population. Judged by the taxes, it is also an eighth part of forty-three billions that the provinces detached from Germany represent, which means five billion three hundred and seventy-five million. If we add to this, by a very liberal estimate, one hundred and twenty-five millions for the diminution in revenues resulting from the loss of the colonies, we may value at five and one-half billions the total decrease of income from taxes due to the reduction of German territory.

In the rest of the Empire German capital resources have sustained, because of the war and certain clauses of the Treaty of Versailles, an important decrease.

The first element in this decrease is the want of upkeep and amortization of the industrial, agricultural and structural capital, representing about two hundred billions of the three hundred and thirty billions which were, according to Helfferich's calculations, Germany's total capital. This depreciation can be estimated at the rate of five per cent. during four years, or forty billions.

On the other side, Germany has seen her foreign investments diminish by about twenty billions. (I mean thereby: transferable securities redeemed, five billions; goods sequestrated by the Allies, thirteen billions; foreign loans, two billions.) The exhaustion of her stock of material represents twenty billions. The damages caused by the Russian invasion in East Prussia, two billions. Lastly, article two hundred and thirty-five in the Peace Treaty obliges Germany to pay from now on till May 1, 1921, either in cash or in products, twenty billions to the Allies.

The reduction in capital resulting from these various causes is consequently one hundred billions. Helfferich rated at six per cent. the average annual net interest of German capital. Consequently it is at six billions that we can value the decrease in the annual production corresponding to the decrease of one hundred billions capital. By adding to this income decrease of six billions that of five and one-half billions resulting from the losses in territory, we can estimate at eleven and one-half billions the annual reduction sustained by Germany's productive force, this productive force falling from forty-three billion marks before the war to thirty-one and one-half billions after the peace.

Her Reduced Consumption

BUT here a factor intervenes that Mr. Keynes scarcely mentions, and on which we must lay stress. I mean the decrease in consumption. The war and the peace have reduced Germany's production: this we know. But they have also reduced—and reduced considerably—her consumption. I leave aside, as above, the reduction resulting from the losses in killed; because in both cases it is of small importance. But there remain two elements that must retain our attention: on the one hand, the reduction in the consumption resulting from the losses in territory; on the other, that resulting from the restriction in comfort and the change in the general standard of living.

The losses in territory represent one-eighth of the population of the Empire; the reduction in consumption due to it can be estimated at one-eighth of thirty-three billions, or four billions. As to the restriction in comfort, it is an obvious consequence of new habits acquired during war time and which the present high price of commodities have continued to make imperative for large sections of the population. The fact that the subscriptions to the war loans have totaled three hundred and one billions and that the increase of deposits in the saving-banks and in the

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banks represent twenty-eight billions, tends to confirm the fact that consumption has decreased. Several German economists estimate this annual restriction at thirteen to fifteen billions, but these figures are perhaps exaggerated. By valuing it at six billions, we are sure of understating the truth. The total reduction of consumption is thus settled at ten billions, the total consumption falling from thirty-three billions to twenty-three billions.

From the preceding figures we can say that the annual surplus of the production over the consumption, valued before the war at ten billions (43—33 = 10) can be valued after the war at eight and one-half billions (31.5—23 = 8.5). I am not an economist, and I set down these figures as a rough estimate, without presuming to deduce from them the kind of conclusion Mr. Keynes deduces from his. I merely find therein the right to affirm that, when the latter declares that the maximum Germany can pay in thirty years—and, withal, on condition that the territorial and economic stipulations of the treaty be revised—amounts to two billion pounds sterling, he takes undue advantage of his interest in Germany, and in Germany's prosperity alone.

Notice that the surplus computed here above represents for the greatest part a surplus in products, and consequently indicates a gold value that increases in the same proportion as the value of products expressed in gold has increased in the past five years. A policy of restriction can develop still more this surplus and increase the funds available by Germany for the settling of her debt. Observe also that, contrary to the situation of all the victorious countries (except the United States), for which the war has resulted in a heavy foreign indebtedness, Germany emerges from the war, because of the blockade organized against her, without an exterior debt worth speaking of.

Mr. Keynes deems that during many years to come these annuities will not be able to exceed one hundred million pounds sterling (or two billion marks gold). The figures just examined allow us to affirm that he is mistaken, and that the same prejudices which mislead him in his appreciation of what is just and unjust, confuse also his view of the economic situation. The fifteen lines in which he disdainfully discards the argument outlined above can not suffice to justify his criticism of the treaty.

The "Blank Check" Indemnity

I DON'T know, and no one does, what Germany will be able to pay, either in five or in ten years. It is precisely because no one to-day can know it that the heads of the Allied Governments and their experts at the end of April, 1919, unanimously agreed upon the adoption of the plan of payment included in the treaty, which (the total of the indemnity being settled at the latest on May 1, 1921) confides to the Commission of Reparations the task of establishing each year the sum total and the manner of the annual payments. When those stipulations were set down, Mr. Keynes was attached to the British delegation. Notes from his own pen, which express these principles, exist, as I have already mentioned, in the documents of the Conference, and they have been in my possession. After having given his resignation on the following seventh of June, he immediately devoted

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his leisure to disowning the arguments he developed the very day before, and to discrediting as best he could the work on which he had actively collaborated. It is a question whether the authority of the treaty or the authority of Mr. Keynes's book will thereby be diminished.

It is my duty in concluding to add that this book, condemnable in its principle and unsound in its basis, is dangerous in its consequences.

Dangerous Effects of Criticism

WITHOUT implicating Mr. Keynes personally, I am obliged to remark that his views have found the enthusiastic approval of international financial organizations, which have reasons, too well known, for desiring a hasty and indulgent settlement of the German indemnity. Many among them, indeed, not only in neutral countries but even in several allied countries, have assumed, on the mark as well as on German securities, speculative commitments that imperatively demand a prompt and favorable liquidation of the German indebtedness, and in order to carry out to their advantage the transaction they have begun, they would not hesitate to sacrifice the rights of the mutilated, the widows and the orphans. The triumphant success which Mr. Keynes himself and his book met with in these spheres, bears witness to the immediate interest that some found in making his ideas prevail. It would be unjust to make him directly responsible for this. But it is necessary, in revealing matters as they stand, to point out that this book, with its air of scientific authority, plays into the hands of the speculators.

Politically its influence has not been less detestable. In the relations between nations, everything is not exclusively a matter of coal, ore, importation and exportation. There are also spiritual and psychological questions, and Mr. Keynes, through his absolute intention of disregarding them, narrows himself down to an incomplete and false view of human realities. The campaign in favor of the revision of the treaty has, in this respect, had a pernicious influence.

It has given France the impression that the Allies were indifferent to her trials, and preferred their own commercial satisfaction to her rights. It has specially given Germany the illusion that, no sooner was the ink of the signers dry, than the Treaty of Versailles had become a scrap of paper, like the one of which von Bethmann-Hollweg spoke in 1914. All the failures to execute its provisions recorded for six months against Germany—her refusal to disarm and her refusal to pay; the attempt by force of arms like the one of Kapp; and the revolutionary troubles like those of the Ruhr—are direct consequences of the views that have taken hold of the minds of our enemies of yesterday, due to Mr. Keynes's campaign and the echo it has found among them.

Germany—and she has shown it before and during the war—has a limited psychology. If she is convinced that the Allies, who have made a rigorous treaty because the ruins of the war were immense, but who have made a treaty that is just because these ruins were the work of the agressors, will exact by every means the execution of this treaty, she will take measures to insure its execution, and she will

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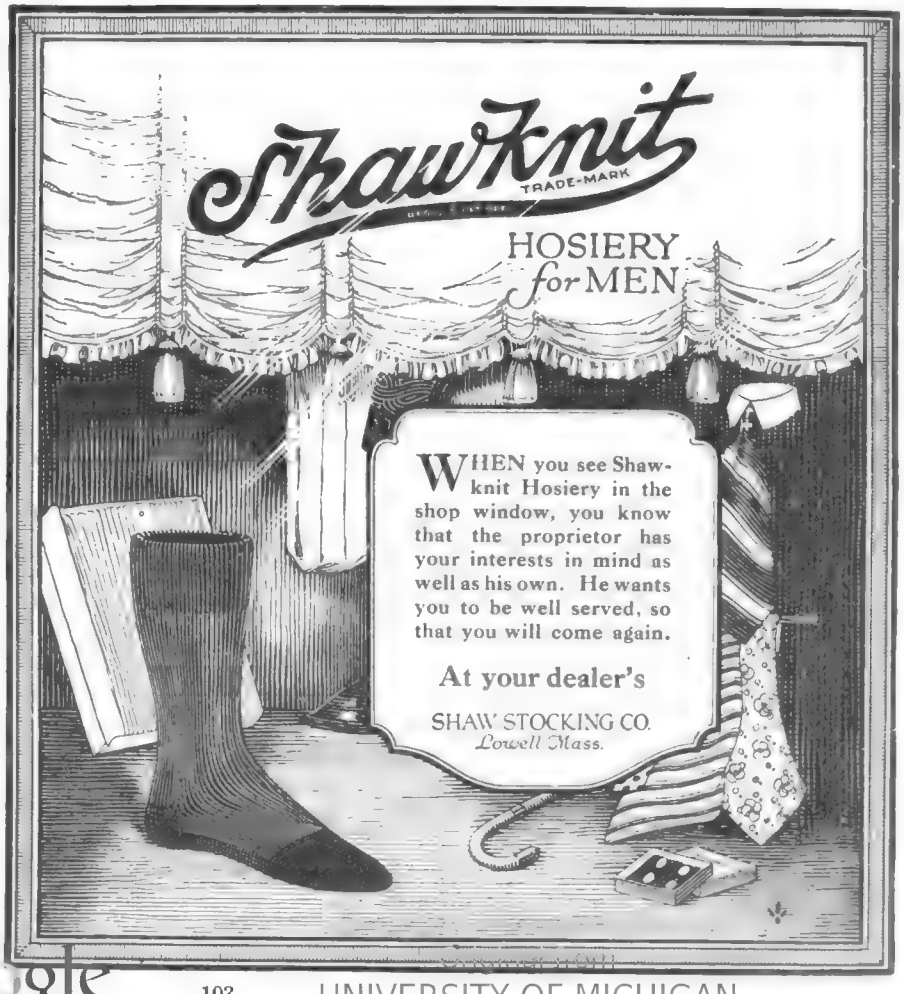
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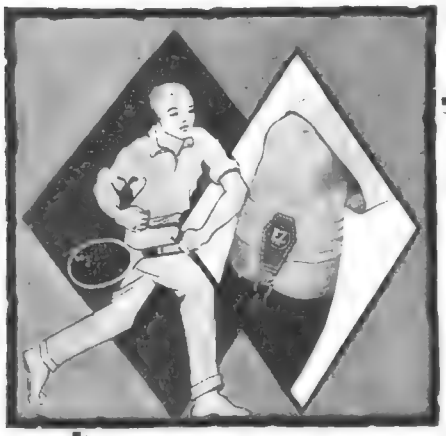

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fulfil its terms. If, on the contrary, the opposite conviction asserts itself, even were she to feel that she is capable of executing it, she will not do so. Mr. Keynes alleges that she *can not put it through*, on account of her economic situation. Is it, then, her economic situation that prevents Germany from surrendering her cannon, or that obliges her to build in the neighborhood of her big cities aviation sheds camouflaged as barns, where Allied officers constantly discover dozens of machines armed and ready to take their flight?

Evidently not; and this problem, I repeat it, is first of all of a psychological order. The truth is that Germany is determined not to desist in her refusal, because she believes that this refusal will bear no consequences. Mr. Keynes's book, and the success that has been vouchsafed him by certain people, are greatly responsible for this state of mind.

This, therefore, is another reason why we should condemn Mr. Keynes's book. This book, inelegant in its origin, partial in its spirit, subjected to a narrow materialism, appears to me the negation of all the war aims of the Allies. Its great weakness is to admit as a postulate that Germany is necessarily the economic center of Europe, and to subordinate everything to this thesis. An astonishing indulgence toward Germany; the blind acceptance of all the German arguments; the determination to be unconscious of all interest that is not German, to discuss only the figures that are non-German, to be moved to pity only by the German sufferings; a complete forgetfulness of the origin of the war and of the basis of the peace; a systematic misunderstanding of the honest, though imperfect, effort made by the Paris Conference to safeguard, without violating the rights of the vanquished, the much-more-to-be-respected rights of the victims of German aggression—all these are the consequences and the aggravation of his initial error. This book, written in brilliant language, is the work of a man whose talent serves the worst of causes. His statement, or, to be more exact, his charge against the Allies, does not stand close examination; but it can be dangerous for those who are satisfied with superficial reading. There are books that are bad acts. I fear that this is one of them, and that it has already done much harm.

City Windows

By Charlton Lawrence Edholm

TIER upon tier,
Cell upon tiny cell,
They rise in the night,
Glowing amber against a somber sky
Like monstrous honeycombs.

Honeycombs! That's what they are,
Those lights from city windows
Ranged so compactly in the hive,
Street after crowded street.

Honeycomb packed with the essence
Of human desires;
With a wild tang of unrestraint,
With a bitter tang of hate, yes,
But mostly with the rich, sweet harvest
Of your hearts, O men and women:
Of the unguessed flowers of cities.

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"SOME TALK *of* ALEXANDER—"

(*Continued from page 14*)

her husband was a street bookmaker. His beat was down in the docks' quarter. He was out all day from immediately after breakfast until late at night or early in the morning. She never knew at what hour he would come in or in what drunken state he would arrive. Supper always had to be ready for him whatever the hour was, always just ready to the turn or—she indicated those bruised arms. His business and his companionship was with the roughest men, he often brought dreadful men to the house at night; but every one was afraid of him; he always carried a revolver. (That made Mr. Bywash shudder. It was a thing he always remembered.)

SHE told him all her life story. It was impossible to imagine any one finding attraction in Mr. Bywash's company, but misery makes strange companions and she was abject in misery and loneliness and fear. Her attitude toward Mr. Bywash was that she welcomed his company as the prisoner in his cell comes to welcome and make friends of the timid mouse.

She told him all about herself. Her father had been a master in the merchant service.

"Why, my father was in the navy," cried Mr. Bywash. It seemed to make a bond between them. "In the Royal Navy. He was a captain."

It was the first time he had ever been proud of his father's position. The first time he had ever thought tuppence about it. How wonderful to be talking about things like this with some one!

Her father was drowned at sea. She and her mother were left penniless, here in Stormouth. They started to take in lodgers—first a good class; and then, not getting them, a poor class; and then, still struggling, and her mother ailing, any class that prayers would bring. So this man came—Mr. Wilks—of whom always she had been terrified, with whom ultimately she was forced into marriage. Her mother was failing, her mother needed comforts; at last, if her mother's life was to be saved, she needed better conditions altogether—and there was scarcely enough to keep the roof over their heads. Then the man offered her marriage, promises for her mother's well-being, everything that they most desperately needed. She was terrified. This offer followed the offer of sale of herself on baser terms but for the same prize—her mother's life. She had rejected that with such spirit as she dared show to their sole means of support. In its turn she rejected this. She could not, could not bring herself to it; and her mother worsened and, knowing only cunning kindness from the man, began to implore her consent. But she could not. She simply could not.

Pitiably she presented to Mr. Bywash her life at that period—attending on her mother, attending on the man. Besought by her mother, and watching her dying before her eyes; baited by the man and terrified of him, revolted by him.

Oh pitiable! Mr. Bywash had never had the remotest idea that such things went on in life. Without interests and without solicitudes in his own existence, he had

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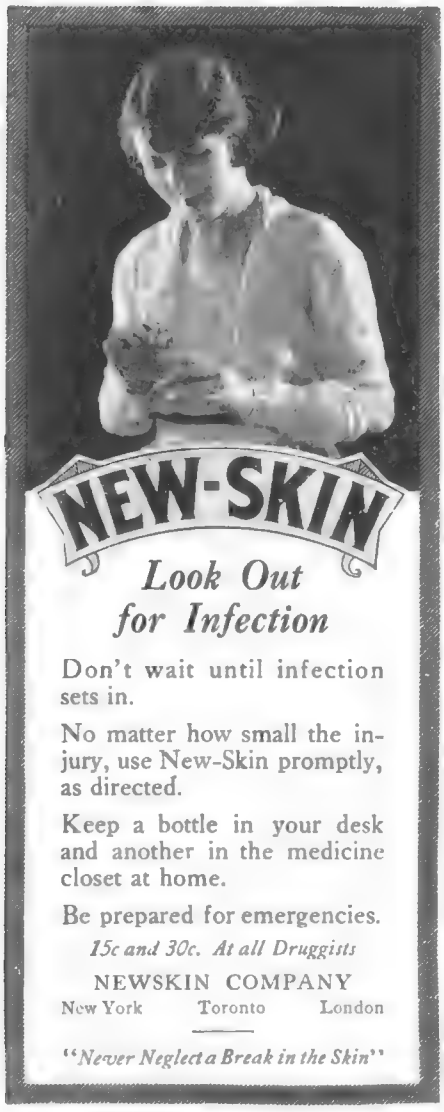

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never even troubled to imagine how other people existed. That this kind of thing should be! That she should suffer it!

But there was much worse. The man came to her one day. "Still can't make up your mind, my girlie?"

"I can't, Mr. Wilks. I really and truly can't—just yet."

"Thought you couldn't. D'you know what? I wantcher so much that I've set about making up your pretty mind for you?"

"Oh, what do you mean?"

She knew it was something terrible. It was. He had bought the house they lived in! They had it on a weekly tenancy. He would give her a fortnight to make up her mind. Within a fortnight she either would marry him and have all she wanted for her mother, or she and her mother would pack up and get out—out into the street.

She married him.

Her mother, betrayed in every promise, died within the year. That was five years ago. That was all. She twice, as she had said, had tried to run away. He kept her without money. She had stolen from him that with which she had made the attempt whose lamentable termination Mr. Bywash had seen. She never would have the chance again. Where could she go, how could she live, if ever she did again have the chance? And one day he would kill her. She knew he would. Escape—she must escape. Where? How?

She wrung her hands, piteously regarding Mr. Bywash. That was all.

Escape. Where? How? Terrible and enormous enterprises began to shake in Mr. Bywash's mind.

VI

BUT oh the new and amazing life amid which these terrible and enormous enterprises began to form—the revelations, the ecstasies, out of which, like high sparks springing out of flame, they sprung!

All he had never been, all he had never known, stirred, moved, breathed, warmed, awoke and came to life within him. As wine through exhausted senses; as rain among the baked and arid watercourses of the plains; as dew by night upon the desert; as springtide in hibernating homes of creature and of insect; as all of these, so within Mr. Bywash saps that had never flowed, pulses that had never beat, ardors that had never kindled, emotions whose suns had never dawned, perceptions whose eyes had never opened.

He loved! The spirit breathed upon the waters of his being and that which had been void and purposeless took form and purpose. He loved! The world which had contained for him nobody and nothing contained a glorious and a wondrous other and, through her, teemed, hymned, and radiated with glories and with wonders.

He had never opened his heart to himself much less to another. He opened it to her and the flood of its outpouring was beyond words delicious to him. He told her all his life as she had told him hers. He told her of his father and his mother, of Harry and of Tom. Oh wonderful to have some one to tell such things to! He never had had any pride or affection in his people. Enormous pride and enormous affection came in the telling. And when he was absent from her, other incredibly delectable emotions—dreams, visions, amazing revelations of unsuspected worlds.

He never had read anything in his life except the newspaper, desultorily. He began to be voracious of reading, novels, stories, cheap, trashy stuff. His only guide to them was their hectic covers and their burning titles. Love was the only thing he sought in them. He skipped all else that they contained. How the hero loved and how the heroine loved; how their love came to them; how they felt their love and how they declared their love. That was all he wanted. Avid to know, avid to compare their transports with his transports, to express his surgings in terms of their surgings, frenzied to be schooled in love, with hungry eyes and hungry hands he tore love from these cheap and crudely written prints as a starving animal tears meat from a bone. He would rip out pages and carry them with him, transcribe passages and get them by heart.

ONE day she told him her name was Enid.

Enid!

There were three outstanding things that happened in this matter of reading. They came from sources incomparably above the stuff whereon he feasted, but that they, in the case of two, came upon him detached and removed from their surrounding confusions, would have been altogether beyond his comprehension.

One was the lines printed beneath a water-color painting of a bowl of violets hanging in a print-seller's window:

> —violets dim,
> But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
> Or Cytherea's breath.

It smote him like a catch at his throat. Once when she was talking to him she had closed her eyes and he had trembled to see the exquisite softness and smoothness and delicacy of her lids. White; and yet not white for having the faintest, softest tinge of blue. He had gazed as a pilgrim might gaze upon a shrine. He had never imagined such a hue could be. Lo, here was the very expression of it, the inexpressible expressed exactly, the vision so ethereal that he never could precisely recall it, here precisely recalled. "Violets dim—" Yes! Yes! And sweeter—"Sweeter than Cytherea's breath." That meant if you stooped to touch with your lips a bed of violets. Yes! Yes! Exactly that if one might stoop to kiss those lids of hers! Wonderful! Wonderful! That was what he wanted—words to express these astounding things, these exquisite and thrice entrancing things.

The second occasion touched a profounder depth and led directly to the third. The second occasion was before the second-hand bookseller's from whose tray of cheap moderns and periodicals he distilled his love potions. Within the window were displayed volumes of the poets; opened, their leaves bound back with bands. Searching amid his sensational covers, his eye glanced up to the books and idly took a verse:

> I held it truth with him who sings
> To one clear harp in divers tones

Meaningless! But his eye, on the point

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of returning to his quest, was held, and completed the stanza:

> That men may rise on stepping-stones
> Of their dead selves to higher things.

Ah! He caught at his breath with the sound as it were of a sob.

On stepping-stones—may rise on stepping-stones—of their dead selves—to higher things. *Might* they? *Could* they? Might he? Could he? Could he get himself like Tom? Like Harry? Could he rise to their courage, to their bold, manly qualities? Was it possible indeed that on stepping stones of those shocking infirmities of spirit of which he now was so poignantly aware he could rise to—to courage? Not shrink? Not tremble? Not shudder every time there came across his mind the image of that violent and frightful man? Not know that in a crisis, that if a crisis ever came between that man and her and him, not know that in such a crisis inevitably he would desert her? Was it possible?

He turned from the book shop, new matter from that which had taken him there in his mind, and the wind toppled the upmost of a pile of battered second-hand rag-bag stuff. He stooped to replace it and his thumb was upon the concluding words of the volume.

"*—So he passed over and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.*"

He looked at the title. "Pilgrim's Progress." He read again, two lines higher,

"*—to the river side, into which as he went he said 'Death, where is thy sting?' And as he went down deeper he said 'Grave, where is thy victory?' So he passed over and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.*"

Courage! Courage! Oh matchless sublimity of courage here!

He bought the book—tuppence!—and hurried with it to his lodging.

VII

HE WAS back at Tidborough.

He was planning her escape.

He had for some time known a little empty cottage on the outskirts of the village of Penny Green, a few miles from Tidborough. He sold a portion of the investments left him by his father and bought the cottage; and now the rapturous delights of searching shops to furnish and adorn it—for her!

Before he left her, on the termination of his holiday, he told her of the cottage and of the escape it offered her. He pretended the cottage was already his; "on his hands," as he put it, and would be all the better for having a tenant. How was she to live? That was simple. There was an immense demand for furnished rooms in and around Penny Green; it had always been an idea of his to put into this cottage some one who could let off the two spare rooms there would be; it was really a piece of luck for him to find her for the purpose.

That was how he put it. That the demand for rooms in Penny Green was much greater than the supply was true; he knew it well in the course of his duties at the estate office. The inventions of his story—the cottage "on his hands," the service she would do him by occupying it—were for the purpose of maintaining the part in which, quite well he knew, alone rested her acceptance of his companionship; the prisoner's mouse, the strange but welcome visitant of her immolation. No more than that; and as, in their meetings, he had never dared to hint at his love, so now, in his plan for her escape, he sedulously presented no more than kindliness.

To hint at more risked giving her alarm, severance of their friendship, refusal of his aid. And threatened worse than that. He knew she never had remotely imagined feelings of love for him; but he felt it surely would kill him to hear it, in actual fact, from her lips. He was as one knowingly carrying within him sentence of death in form of mortal sickness but terrified to present himself to the physician and hear his doom. Therefore his acceptance of his part, therefore his inventions, therefore his reiteration to her only of this most true portion of his case—that never in his life till now had he had any one to talk to; that talking to her, telling her all about himself, was the most exquisite happiness he ever had imagined, and that he begged her, in charity, to accept this means of escape so that he still might come over to her in his leisure hours and sit—and just talk.

In his daydreams he dreamt to himself that one day, one day . . .

ONE day— He was arranging her escape. He was planning also the winning of her love to which gratitude for her escape should be the first step. She never could love him as he was, of that he was perfectly assured. The task was to remake himself—on stepping-stones—of his dead self— And that was to become a man. Not to shrink. Not to tremble. Not to be one useless mass of fears. To be a man. Like Tom. Like Harry. Like other men. Courage. Courage. The battered "Pilgrim's Progress," more battered for his ceaseless use of it, was now his daily sustenance. As he had torn love from his periodicals, so now voraciously he sought to tear courage from the leaves of Bunyan's story. The allegorical significance was no more to him than, in search of love, had been the plots of the novels. It was solely the emotions and the expressions of love his heart had desired; it now was solely the emotions and expressions of courage for which his spirit craved. He read the book again and again and again; and every snatch of reading he terminated with the enormous elixir of that concluding line:

"*So he passed over and all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side.*"

That tingled him. That set his foot upon those dead self stepping-stones and raised him up. He used to imagine himself doing some mighty and splendid thing and all the trumpets sounding for him as he went proudly toward her, proudly, lovingly awaiting him. That was the thing! That was it! One day— One day—

All was ready! He was walking to the cottage for a last indulgence in the sight of all the beauty and the comforts he had prepared for her. To-morrow was the day fixed. Everything was planned and she had written confirming the plans. In case, after her flight, inquiries should be made at the station she was to take the morning express train to London. That would throw her husband off the scent. From London a train which would get her

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to Tidborough at three o'clock. He would not meet her at the station. He was to have the ecstasy ("the pleasure" as he had temperately expressed it in writing to her) of welcoming her in the cottage "which I think you will find"—another careful expression of the mere friendliness that was his—"which I think you will find more or less ready for you."

More or less! The quaint old cottage, beautiful in itself, had lent its interior to beauty in its decoration. Love gave him taste. There was not an article he had purchased, nor one he had placed in position, but her face had been imagined against it, directing his perceptions as the north star directs the wanderer. A neighboring cottager, Mrs. Jennings, had been brought in daily to assist the arranging. Stepping in with him on his arrival on this last evening she gave the admiration that was enchantment to him to hear.

"Well, if it isn't just a picture," declared Mrs. Jennings, gazing round the parlor. "A picture. I never would have believed to see the like of it outside of a real picture, I declare to goodness I wouldn't, and that's the truth, sir."

How pleased he was! He patted the head of tiny Laura, Mrs. Jennings's little girl, and with his other hand felt in his pocket for Laura's present that was to celebrate this splendid conclusion.

"Yes, it certainly does look nice, Mrs. Jennings. And, Mrs. Jennings, you're going to let Laura be over here to-morrow to be playing here when the lady arrives?"

Mrs. Jennings certainly was. She would just pop Laura inside on her way to work after lunch and there she'd be, all nice and pretty for the lady.

"And playing with her musical box," smiled Hector, producing the present from his pocket.

How tiny Laura jumped and clapped her hands for joy! She had been promised anything she liked from the toyshops at Tidborough and a musical box, like one of her friends had, had been what Hector was asked to buy. Mr. Bywash, in so far as he had ever noticed them at all, had always detested children. The new emotions that now were his had opened in the most astonishing way to tiny Laura. He loved to see her playing about the floor. Enid would want a companion. Enid would love to have tiny Laura constantly with her. He used to sit and imagine Enid with the child on her knees, telling her stories, Enid making tea with the child clutching at her skirts. It made him feel—indescribable; it made his heart swell.

MRS. JENNINGS ran off to her cottage. He sat himself down in the chair specially chosen for Enid's comfort. Tiny Laura at his feet fumbled the musical box out of its wrappings.

To-morrow! This time to-morrow Enid would be here. She would have examined the beauties of the cottage. She would be making tea for him. She would be enchanted. She would be beyond expression happy. In her heart would be the beginnings of her gratitude. The beginnings—the beginnings . . .

"Now you're right, Laura. Turn the handle. Let's hear the pretty tunes."

He only knew of the toy that the girl in the shop had called it a "three-tune" box. He smiled to see tiny Laura's tongue

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come out and move from side to side under the strain of her melody making. The tinkling tune was vaguely familiar. Some popular national air. He had probably heard it on street organs, perhaps in the park at Stormouth. He wondered if Enid could play the piano; and how much would one cost? Imagine sitting here of an evening while she played. The musical box clicked. The music stopped.

"Go on, Laura. Wind on. Another one coming."

Yes, a piano. A piano would be fine if he could afford it. It could stand by the window there. How beautiful she would look seated at the keys. How she would love this room. To-morrow at this hour she would be here. How grateful she would be to him. How wonderful, indeed, that he had done all this. Planned her escape, purchased this home, furnished it. It all had wanted some doing. It had. It was not a thing that every one could have carried out so successfully. How he had developed in these last few weeks. He was twice, he was a dozen times, the man he used to be. Stepping-stones—of those dead selves. He was climbing up. He was. He was certain of it!

"Go on, Laura. Wind away. Still another. Here, let me do this one." He stooped forward and took the box. Yes, climbing up— Would never look back now— He wound the handle.

Some talk of Alexander and some of Hercules,
Of Hector and—

"Take it, Laura. Take it away. You'd better go home now. You're to go home now. Don't you hear? No; don't play it. You're not to wind it. Time to go now. Don't you *hear?*"

Laura was frightened.

THE day was Thursday; early closing day at Tidborough and chosen for that reason. He left the office at one o'clock. He had bought a "best suit" since this new thing had come into his life, and he went first to his lodgings to spruce himself up in it before going on to the cottage to await her. His spirits were high. The night had been bad. He had scarcely slept. That tune, that infernal, hateful tune, coming like that upset him. Through the night it had washed at the foundations of his new beliefs in himself as rising waters washing about timbers built in sand. Had he changed? Had he improved? If there came to his courage a test— Was it an omen, that accursed tune, coming like that, in that place, at that hour, made by his own hands?

A feverish and tortured night.

But with the morning his oppression had gone. After all, at the worst, if indeed he was no more than the man he had been, even then, what test of his courage could there possibly be? When she was safely arrived here she would be as secure here and he would be as secure here as if they were on another continent. It became easy, as the morning advanced, to build up from this certitude of safety assurance of courage if there were danger.

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He was working briskly upon it as he let himself into his lodgings and passed up the stairs to his room. Everything

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was safe. Everything was easy. Everything was wonderful and glorious. He was miles removed from the timid thing he had been. He could wish there might be some test of his manhood that Enid could see. If the horse that would be drawing her cab were to run away and he rush out from the cottage and stop it! If a bull were to frighten her in the lane outside and he most audaciously attack the brute and rescue her! Something like that!

But it was not anything like that. It was something quite different.

As he opened the door of his room and stepped within, the huge and malevolent form of her husband rose to greet him.

"Shut that door," said Mr. Wilks.

He turned and shut it.

One of those enormous fists of Mr. Wilks presented a revolver straight in his face. The other fist shot out and into his chest like a battering ram, staggering him backward. But the fist clutched him, gathering up the better part of his waistcoat and of his shirt in its enormous paw, and shook him ferociously so that his teeth knocked together. "Where's my wife?"

His tongue, in his sheer terror, clove to the roof of his mouth. He could not speak.

"Where is she? Out with it!"

"Not here."

Again that frightful shaking jerking his head to and fro. "Not here! I can see that with me own blasted eyes, can't I? Is she in this house?"

"No."

"Coming here?"

"No."

He was shaken to and fro for a full half-minute. "Listen to me. I know you've got her away." He called her by a gross epithet. The —— left half your letters behind. I know you've got her." Mr. Wilks returned the revolver to his pocket and put up the fist that had held it, clenched, terrific. "Am I going to start this on your face or are you going to tell me? Quick with it!"

"I'll tell you."

"Quick with it."

He told.

Mr. Wilks flung him away with a violent motion. He spun along the wall, crashed into the washing-stand and fell over it to the floor. The ewer capsized and shattered. The water drenched him.

"Get up," commanded Mr. Wilks. "You louse. Run away with a man's wife! *You!* Get up and show the way and me lady'll see what I'm going to do with you, and you'll see what I'm going to do with me lady. Up with you!"

VIII

THEY were in the cottage, waiting for her. Mr. Wilks lolled in an armchair, a cigar in his mouth, his legs on the table. Hector Bywash sat opposite him, the table between them, his head bowed in his hands. In the little room adjoining was tiny Laura. Mr. Wilks, engaged on arrival in ferocious mockery of the decorations of the pretty parlor, had not appeared to notice the child. Hector had smuggled her out of view and shut the door upon her.

While they waited was the steady ticking of the clock upon the wall—bringing her closer—the heavy breathing of Mr. Wilks, inclined to doze, the occasional sharp intake of Hector's breath, in vision watching her approach to his betrayal of her, sometimes through the door the faint tinkle of the musical box.

Hector Bywash, head buried in his hands, was silently rocking his shoulders up and down in agony of this culmination to which he had brought his life, his new found dreams, his new raised hopes in himself.

All his life's uselessness and turpitude had culminated in this unspeakable betrayal of the woman he worshiped.

"Where's my wife?" and, vilest thing that he was, he had betrayed her with the very next breath that he drew. His mind ran up and down his life that had brought him to this final perfidy and he groaned aloud.

"Shut that," commanded Mr. Wilks drowsily; and he was silent.

His mind, as one that runs distractedly to and fro, wringing his hands, before his house in flames, ran up and down his every scene with her, his every thought of her; and from every scene and every thought came back to this his betrayal of her, this the trap he had prepared for her. His mind stood among the ecstasies of love he had torn from his periodicals and books; it cried with a most terrible bitterness before the heights of courage which fondly he believed he had imitated from the pages of his "Pilgrim's Progress." And always back to his betrayal of her.

And suddenly there penetrated the agony of his mind this most frightful thought *"There's still time to save her!"*

SOME men successfully flee judgment all their lives; wriggle from truth, elude truth, stifle truth, somehow get away and escape truth. Mr. Bywash had thus fled and thus escaped for all the decades of his maturity. But now he was run to earth. He was caught. Truth had him.

And immediately there came to him, as there comes to men thus captured, trial within his own bosom of the kind that is said to await all men in the last senate of eternity. As then before God, so here within their own hearts, the captives of truth protest their case before the verities seated in judgment about them.

Mr. Bywash, laid by the heels after a very long run of freedom, stood now in such a court; a very tiny figure, prisoner at the bar of truth, a very pitiable object for the assemblage of such a tremendous tribunal, and looked from the records of life hung upon the walls to the faces of the verities sitting as arbiters upon his case, and wrung his hands, and protested.

The defendant: "My lords, my lords, it's all very well—My lords, you see—My lords, you must surely see, it was like this—if only I had had a minute's preparation! If only, as I went up those stairs, I had known he was waiting in my room! If only I had even heard him when I was just the other side of the door. If only I had had the smallest, faintest warning, I would have had time to think, I would have had time to steel myself and I wouldn't have done it. I wouldn't. Indeed and indeed, my lords, I would not have done it.

The Arbiters: "Attend. You have got time now. Time to think, time to steel yourself, time to prevent it. You have betrayed her but she hasn't yet come to your betrayal. She's on the road. But

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there's—look at the clock—twenty minutes before she can get here. Twenty minutes between you and what you will be forever after. Twenty minutes not to do it—and you haven't done it yet. Twenty minutes to save her."

The Defendant with shaking limbs crept out of the court.

Mr. Bywash very cautiously raised his bowed head to the level of the table. The huge soles of Mr. Wilks's boots confronted him. He raised his glance above them. Mr. Wilks's eyes were half closed, no glow was to be seen upon the cigar that depended from his mouth.

Mr. Bywash's mind fixed on the revolver that had been pointed at him. He knew which pocket it was in. If he could get that! The light table was so small that its farther end was well beneath Mr. Wilks's thighs, and Mr. Wilks's chair was slightly tilted on its back legs. If he gave one great heave from beneath the table—and then a dash and a grab for the revolver while the man was sprawling—if he did that—if he could—if he dared—Ten minutes passed. He went back into the court and the court reassembled to hear him.

The Defendant: "My lords, my lords, it's like this. You see, if I *did* attack him what could I possibly *do?* I'm ready to try. I'm perfectly ready to do it. I swear I am. But what earthly good could I do? Any one looking at me and looking at him would say it would be grotesque and useless folly. In two minutes I should be killed. My lords, my lords, isn't that the fact? Isn't that *true?* What earthly good? In two minutes I should be killed."

The Arbiters: "Be killed, then."

The Defendant covered his face with his hands and bowed, as beneath an insupportable weight, to the ground.

The Arbiters, unmoved: "Be killed, then."

From the Defendant, prone upon the ground, no word.

The Arbiters: "Be killed then. That will save her."

The Defendant, screaming: "How? How? How can it save her?"

The Arbiters: "Attend. You have never faced truth in your life. You are facing it now. You have always argued yourself out of every danger. You now can not argue yourself out. Be killed. It will save her. If you are killed, he will have murdered you. He will flee for his life. He will never dare to come near her again. She will be free of him for ever. You have five minutes, Bywash."

The court withdrew and left Mr. Bywash.

IX

HE THOUGHT "'On stepping-stones—of their dead selves'—One quick ent and it will all be over. At once, lon't do it at once——"

He put his hands beneath the table. He sprang upright and hurled the table up and back. He flung himself upon the sprawling, cursing body, and dived, and thrust in his hand and got it—the revolver. He was clutched and overthrown. They were somehow upon their feet. The revolver was in his right hand. The left hand of Mr. Wilks was upon it. The other hand was at his throat, throttling him.

This is what happened:

The revolv was muzzle upward in their united grasp between them. They held it elbow to elbow, forearm to forearm, wrist to wrist, knuckle to knuckle. It was poised between them and like the dial of a pressure gage moved now to this side, now to that, now tensely quivered at the apex of its movement. Sometimes it went a little nearer Mr. Wilks's chin, sometimes a little nearer the chin of Mr. Bywash, sometimes trembled almost at rest midway between them.

MR. BYWASH'S face was black with the pressure of Mr. Wilks's fingers upon his throat. But while the eyes of Mr. Wilks bulged with fear and with savagery as he strove for decision of the weapon, the eyes of Mr. Bywash shone with an intense and an extraordinary light. The deep waters of death were about him and he knew himself descending into death; but he might have said, "Death where is thy sting?" And he felt his strength going and knew the end was upon him; but he might have said, "Grave, where is thy victory?"

An enormous exaltation of mind was his. There was a great roaring in his ears but it was to him as the clamor of many voices acclaiming him. He relaxed his arm; and the pistol came with a thud to his neck and was discharged.

He collapsed at the knees in the arms of Mr. Wilks. He collapsed at the waist and fell away in the arms of Mr. Wilks, his head hanging.

Mr. Wilks stared with starting eyes upon his face. Mr. Wilks said terribly, "My God! My God!"

He dropped the body of Hector Bywash and stood away and stared in terror. He turned and rushed from the house. A cab was drawing up at the door. The driver shouted.

Mr. Wilks put up his arms to hide his face and turned in the other direction and fled down the road.

A small sigh passed from the lips of Mr. Bywash; and there tinkled from the adjoining room:

Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules;
Of Hector and Lysander and such great—

So, to that threnody he passed over; and it was perhaps, as he had wished, that "all the trumpets sounded for him on the other side."

A Day

By Amy E. Blanchard

SHORT it is: the rising sun,
Noon's heated journey quickly run,
little candlelight,
body's rest, the night,
d it is done.

Life is not more: birth, noonday's rush,
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